

## AGENDA

### **CABINET**

**MONDAY, 18 DECEMBER 2023**

**2.00 PM**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, FENLAND HALL,  
COUNTY ROAD, MARCH**

Committee Officer: Linda Albon  
Tel: 01354 622229  
e-mail: [memberservices@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:memberservices@fenland.gov.uk)

- 1 To receive apologies for absence
- 2 Previous Minutes (Pages 3 - 6)  
  
To confirm and sign the public minutes of 20 November 2023.
- 3 To receive members' declaration of any interests under the Local Code of Conduct or any interest under the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters in respect of any item to be discussed at the meeting
- 4 To report additional items for consideration which the Chairman deems urgent by virtue of the special circumstances to be now specified
- 5 Draft Business Plan 2024/25 (Pages 7 - 32)  
  
To approve the draft Business Plan 2024-25 for public consultation.
- 6 Revised General Fund Budget and Capital Programme 2023/24, Draft General Fund Budget Estimates 2024/25 and Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024/25 to 2028/29 and Capital Programme 2024-2027 (Pages 33 - 60)  
  
To consider and approve the revised General Fund Budget and Capital Programme for 2023/24, the draft General Fund Budget Estimates 2024/25 and the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2028/29 for consultation and Capital Programme 2024-2027.

7 Open Spaces - Play Areas Capital Investment (Pages 61 - 70)

To consider the details for a planned refurbishment programme for FDC's play areas and the FDC capital investment necessary in the short term.

8 Implementation of a Home Improvement Agency (HIA) service from April 2024 (Pages 71 - 84)

To award the HIA service following a procurement exercise from April 2024 for three years with possible three years extension option.

9 On and Off-Street Parking Enforcement Update (Pages 85 - 96)

To update members on the current progress made by FDC and Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) in respect of the CPE implementation works, following the previous Cabinet update paper on 17 July 2023.

10 Wisbech High Street Update (Pages 97 - 98)

To receive an update regarding ongoing work related to 24 High Street, Wisbech.

11 Draft 6 Month Cabinet Forward Plan (Pages 99 - 100)

For information purposes.

12 Items which the Chairman has under item 3 deemed urgent

**CONFIDENTIAL - ITEMS COMPRISING EXEMPT INFORMATION**

*To exclude the public (including the press) from a meeting of a committee it is necessary for the following proposition to be moved and adopted: "that the public be excluded from the meeting for Items which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as indicated."*

13 Land Lease Renewal Options (confidential) (Pages 101 - 128)

To consider the options and agree a way forward.

14 Confidential Minutes (Pages 129 - 132)

To confirm and sign the confidential minutes of 20 November 2023.

Friday, 8 December 2023

Members: Councillor C Boden (Chairman), Councillor Mrs J French (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor Mrs D Laws, Councillor A Miscandlon, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor C Seaton, Councillor S Tierney and Councillor S Wallwork

## CABINET



**MONDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2023 - 2.00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor C Boden (Chairman), Councillor Mrs J French (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor A Miscandlon, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor C Seaton, Councillor S Tierney and Councillor S Wallwork

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor Mrs D Laws

### **CAB1/23    PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held 11 September 2023 were approved and signed subject to the following amendment:

- Councillor Miscandlon asked that it be noted under minute reference CAB21/23 that he had said 'it is no good the Police abdicating their responsibility', rather than 'advocating'.

### **CAB2/23    STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Members considered the Statement of Community Involvement report presented by Councillor Boden.

**Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and AGREED to approve the Statement of Community Involvement.**

### **CAB3/23    REVIEW AND REFRESH OF PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS (DOG FOULING AND DOG CONTROLS)**

Members considered the Review of Public Spaces Protection Orders report presented by Councillor Murphy.

Councillor Mrs French said she welcomes this review as she receives many dog fouling complaints and hopes that the renewal of this Order will help stop some of the irresponsible dog owners.

**Proposed by Councillor Murphy, seconded by Councillor Miscandlon and AGREED to note the consultation responses and approve renewal of the Public Spaces Protection Order for a further period of three years.**

### **CAB4/23    LEISURE CENTRES**

Members considered the Leisure Centres report presented by Councillor Miscandlon.

Councillor Mrs French asked Councillor Miscandlon if there is any intention to provide these buildings with solar panels in the future. Councillor Miscandlon replied that it is proposed to provide solar panels on at least two, if not three of the leisure centres, and a generous contribution has been received from Sport England to do that.

Councillor Tierney said he is pleased that this is being considered ahead of time, it is hard to overestimate the importance of leisure centres to local people, particularly in respect of swimming

provision where there is no competition. Keeping ahead of the game on planning to keep the centres maintained, operational and effective is a good idea.

**Proposed by Councillor Miscandlon, seconded by Councillor Wallwork and AGREED to authorise officers to proceed to procure the services required to develop the information detailed in 6.1 and to delegate to the Leader of the Council and Section 151 Officer to determine the funding source for these works which will cost approximately £100,000.**

**CAB5/23 UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (SPF)**

Members considered the UK Shared Prosperity Fund report presented by Councillor Benney.

Councillor Miscandlon commented that he fully supports this, the younger generation are missing out on job training and apprenticeships. This is the way forward and it will encourage companies to recruit apprentices and further the education of young people in the district.

Councillor Boden said that Fenland has one of the worst records for skills in the country and the Council must take advantage of every opportunity to give everyone the chance to increase their skills and the skill level of the area.

**Proposed by Councillor Benney, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and AGREED to the allocation of the SPF Investment in Business budget for 2024-25.**

**CAB6/23 RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND (REPF)**

Members considered the Rural England Prosperity Fund report presented by Councillor Benney.

Councillor Mrs French said she welcomes this report as it is a great opportunity for local businesses to get involved and help in these difficult times.

Councillor Boden said that the reason for putting all the money into business growth this year was because the money was received late in the day but with an obligation to spend a certain proportion of it in 2023/24. It was impractical to find community and place projects to do that whereas the Council had all the contacts needed to put money into business growth. That is why the community and place side will take place in 2024/25 and the money spent will be evenly divided between business growth and community and place.

Councillor Miscandlon referred to section 1.14 of the report and asked if there are any plans to extend Project 3 to the other market towns within Fenland. Councillor Benney said that he did not know but would come back to Councillor Miscandlon with an answer. Councillor Miscandlon added that this is a good project that should be encouraged across the district; there is an aging population with a considerable number of skills under their belt who could benefit from this. Councillor Boden commended that the funds are limited; Whittlesey has already benefitted from money in Project 2, but it would be appropriate for money to be spread evenly around the district.

**Proposed by Councillor Benney, seconded by Councillor Seaton and AGREED for 2024-25 that the REPF monies should be allocated equally between Business Growth and Community/Place and used as described in the report in sections 1.8 to 1.14.**

**CAB7/23 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS OF RISK OF HARM POLICY**

Members considered the Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk of Harm Policy presented by Councillor Wallwork.

Councillor Miscandlon said it is important for the Council to proactively adopt a policy that is seen to be working; this is a good policy that will help the people of Fenland, so he fully supports it.

Councillor Boden said he liked the concept of the report card, particularly given the relevance of paragraph 1.6. It needs emphasising that whilst this Council does not have responsibility for investigating abuse, all employees, councillors, volunteers, and voluntary service providers have a clear responsibility to act when suspecting anyone may be at significant risk of harm or abuse.

Councillor Hoy asked if there is a similar policy to protect staff and ensure they are safeguarded in their roles. Paul Medd, Chief Executive, responded that Councillor Hoy is referring to potential physical or verbal abuse towards staff. There are policies covering these; internally there is the disciplinary procedure but there are also policies concerning the conduct of abusive customers.

**Proposed by Councillor Wallwork, seconded by Councillor Miscandlon and AGREED to adopt the Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults at Risk of Harm Policy.**

### **CAB8/23 WISBECH PAVILION LEASE AGREEMENT**

Members considered the Wisbech Pavilion Lease Agreement report presented by Councillor Murphy.

Councillor Tierney said looking at this from an FDC perspective it seems an obvious solution. The original purpose was for it to be a community facility; it was never meant to be a highly commercial centre given its size and location and would be difficult to run as a profit-maker for any private company. Whilst FDC does not want the endless commitment of money, it does want to ensure it is managed effectively for the public so a partnership between the town and district councils is the ideal way forward.

Councillor Mrs French asked why, if the landlord is paying peppercorn rent of £1 a year, Fenland District Council is taking responsibility for insurance. Councillor Murphy replied that the insurance is for the building itself which is owned by the Council whilst anything within the building is looked after by Wisbech Town Council. Councillor Boden added that in the interest of the community, Fenland District Council can likely obtain cheaper insurance than the Town Council.

**Proposed by Councillor Murphy, seconded by Councillor Benney and AGREED to confirm that Wisbech Town Council and Fenland District Council should enter a 35-year lease for the management of the pavilion in Wisbech Park and instruct officers to put the necessary legal agreement in place, and to a lease at a rate of £1 p.a. be included in the above agreement, noting that this is below market rate but is typical of agreements of this type of facility.**

*(Councillor Hoy declared for transparency that she was involved in this at town council level brokering the deal so would not vote on this item but would answer any questions).*

*(Councillor Tierney declared that he had sat at a town council meeting and voted on this item from a different perspective, but he would still vote as he was not biased and could look at this from a different council's perspective).*

*(Councillor Wallwork declared that she had previously voted on this item at town council level but can take an unbiased view and vote on this item).*

**CAB9/23    WISBECH HIGH STREET UPDATE**

Members considered the Wisbech High Street Update report presented by Councillor Seaton.

Councillor Seaton advised that he could now provide an update in respect of 11-12 High Street. Turley the consultants are working on a report now and should have a draft for the options needed for funding providers in time for the December cabinet.

**Proposed by Councillor Seaton, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and AGREED to note the current position in relation to the 24 High Street construction project in Wisbech High Street and note information regarding the property at 11-12 High Street.**

**CAB10/23    DRAFT 6 MONTH CABINET FORWARD PLAN**

Councillor Boden presented the draft 6-month Cabinet Forward Plan for information.

**CAB11/23    POTENTIAL PROPERTY ACQUISITION OPPORTUNITY (CONFIDENTIAL ITEM)**

Members considered a potential property acquisition opportunity presented by Councillor Seaton.

Members asked made comments, asked questions and received responses.

**Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Miscandlon and AGREED to approve the continuation of without prejudice negotiations in relation to a proposed property acquisition opportunity subject to the availability of DLUHC funding.**

*(Members resolved to exclude the public for this item of business on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).*

3.09 pm

Chairman

<b>Agenda Item No:</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>18 December 2023</b>	
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>Draft Business Plan 2024-25</b>	

## Cover sheet:

### **1 Purpose / Summary**

1.0 For Cabinet to approve the Draft Business Plan 2024-25 for public consultation.

### **2 Key Issues**

2.0 Our Draft Business Plan 2024-25 identifies the key challenges and opportunities for Fenland. Its structure outlines our key Corporate Priorities (Communities, Environment, Economy and Quality Organisation), and an additional cross cutting 'Transformation Agenda - Council for the Future' section. This section encompasses our ongoing transformation work to improve efficiency and customer experience, drive positive change and ensure the Council is fit for the future.

2.1 Despite global challenges of the last few years and an ever-evolving landscape of public service, no other principal council in the country has a better record for keeping council tax down for its residents than Fenland.

2.2 Almost every other principal council has raised its council tax over the past six years, and of the few which haven't raised their council tax, none can match Fenland's 2% reduction in that period. Fulfilling the mandate on council tax on which the ruling group had been elected, councillors believe that the burden of providing cost-efficient services should fall on the Council itself, a long way before it falls on our residents.

2.3 The Draft Business Plan 2024-25 will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 15 January 2024.

2.4 A Task and Finish group set up from members of the O&S panel have reviewed the current performance indicators. The purpose of the review was to ensure the performance indicators enhanced the Council's corporate priorities and are both measurable and achievable.

2.5 The recommendations from the Task and Finish group can be seen in appendix 1 of this Cabinet report. Cabinet are asked to consider the recommendations of the Task and Finish group outlined in appendix 1.

2.6 The public will be invited to comment on the Draft Business Plan 2024-25 between 2 January and 4 February 2024. Feedback will be incorporated into the final version of the Business Plan that will be considered by Cabinet and Council on 26 February 2024.

### 3 Recommendations

- 3.0 For Cabinet to consider the recommendations of the Task and Finish group outlined in appendix 1 and include in the Draft Business Plan 2024-25.
- 3.1 For Cabinet to approve the Draft Business Plan 2024-25 for public consultation.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	<i>[Insert Reference No. From Forward Plan. (It is a legal requirement to include key executive decisions on the forward plan for 28 days before the decision requested in this report is taken).</i>
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Chris Boden, Leader of the Council Councillor Steve Tierney, Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Communication
Report Originator(s)	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director Carol Pilson, Corporate Director David Wright, Head of Policy & Communications
Contact Officer(s)	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director Carol Pilson, Corporate Director David Wright, Head of Policy & Communications
Background Papers	Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy

### Report:

#### 1 [Reasons for Exemption]

- 1.0 N/A

#### 2 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

- 2.0 The Draft Business Plan 2024-25 sets out the priorities we aim to deliver over the next 12 months. These priorities have been developed to address the most important needs of our communities and set a framework for how we will work towards our ambitions for the area and achieve our goal of creating a thriving place to live and visit.
- 2.1 Our core priorities focus on three areas: Communities, Environment and Economy. These priorities primarily focus on the statutory and wide variety of services that we provide day-to-day. In a typical year we empty 3 million bins, clean 210 square miles of town centres and open spaces, answer 78,000 telephone enquiries and determine 1,300 planning applications – and more! A fourth priority, Quality Organisation, sits alongside everything we do. It aims to ensure that the Council runs effectively, transparently and sustainably. We



invest in and support our workforce to ensure they have the skills and resources they need to work to the best of their ability.

- 2.2 Each priority is underpinned by a series of performance indicators, which are used to track progress, measure success, and identify areas for improvement. All performance indicators are reported to all elected Members at our Council meetings. These public reports are summarised to provide end of year performance updates against our priorities in our Annual Report, which is available to download on our website.
- 2.3 We also have a fifth cross cutting priority: Transformation Agenda. This priority encompasses our ongoing transformation work to improve efficiency and customer experience, drive positive change and ensure the Council is fit for the future.

### **3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.0 For Cabinet to consider the recommendations of the Task and Finish group outlined in appendix 1 and include in the Draft Business Plan 2024-25.
- 3.1 For Cabinet to approve the Draft Business Plan 2024-25 for public consultation.

### **4 CONSULTATION**

- 4.0 The public will be invited to comment on the Draft Business Plan 2024-25 between 2 January and 4 February 2024. Feedback will be incorporated into the final version of the Business Plan that will be considered by Cabinet and Council on 26 February 2024.

### **5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.0 N/A

### **6 IMPLICATIONS**

#### **6.0 Legal Implications**

- 6.1.1 There are no legal considerations connected with the content of this report.

#### **6.1 Financial Implications**

The Draft Business Plan 2024-25 sets out our corporate priorities we aim to deliver over the next 12 months. These are reflected in the Council budget.

#### **6.2 Equality Implications**

N/A

## **7 SCHEDULES**

Appendix 1 – Task and Finish Group Recommendations



# Fenland District Council Business Plan 2024/25

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# Introduction by the Leader and Chief Executive

## Welcome to Fenland District Council's Business Plan for 2024/25.

We are pleased to present Fenland District Council's Business Plan for 2024/25, which sets out our ambitions and priorities for the year ahead.

As you read through the plan, you'll see it is not merely a document, but a testament to our commitment of putting the people we serve at the heart of everything we do.

Despite global challenges of the last few years and an ever-evolving landscape of public service, no other principal council in the country has a better record for keeping council tax down for its residents than Fenland.

Almost every other principal council has raised its council tax over the past six years, and of the few which haven't raised their council tax, none can match Fenland's 2% reduction in that period. Fulfilling the mandate on council tax on which the ruling group had been elected, councillors believe that the burden of providing cost-efficient services should fall on the Council itself, a long way before it falls on our residents.

Councillors are also passionate about building on the Council's strong track record of delivering high quality services people can rely on and, in a changing world, continuing to foster a resilient local authority that can adapt, innovate and lead.

We have big ambitions for the district, but every year we have less money from central government to deliver them. The world around us is changing, but we need to diversify and modernise our services to respond to those changes.

At the core of our plan is a commitment to transformation. In 2023, the Council was nationally recognised by The Municipal Journal for workforce transformation, but we want to do more.



Paul Medd  
Chief Executive



Chris Boden  
Leader of the Council

Through our ongoing Transformation Agenda, we're embracing innovative solutions and investing in technology to reshape the way we work and streamline internal processes. Not only will this make our services more efficient, it will make it easier for residents and businesses to engage with us, resolve matters more quickly, and experience a level of service that reflects the high standards we set.

Another key priority in our plan is directed towards businesses, acknowledging their pivotal role in our local economy. Through targeted funding initiatives and supportive programs, we aim to catalyse entrepreneurial growth, build skills development, and support a vibrant business landscape.

Furthermore, we understand the ongoing challenges many people across Fenland continue to face with the cost of living and will ensure that everyone who needs help has access to the support and guidance available to them.

Guided by the priorities set out in this plan, we will also continue to adopt a more commercial approach in what we do to help deliver our growth aspirations and further futureproof the organisation. We will also promote and develop active and sustainable travel; support Fenland's thriving arts, heritage and culture scene, and improve the way we empower and engage with our local communities.

Collaboration and engagement with our communities, businesses and public sector partners over the next 12 months will, as always, be at the forefront of our approach.

Together, we can face the future with real confidence and deliver a stronger, more connected district of which we can all be proud.

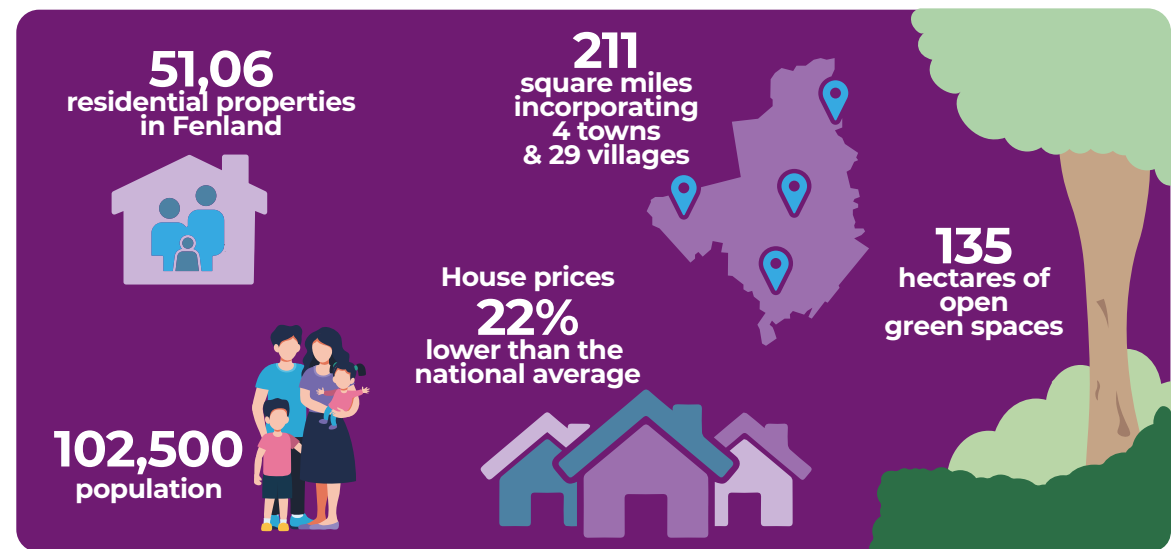
# About Fenland

Fenland has a strong community spirit and pride in its heritage. There are 102,500 people living in Fenland District (ONS: 2021), which covers 211 square miles within North Cambridgeshire. Over 70% of residents live within our four market town of Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech, and our beautiful rural landscape is home to 29 villages.

Fenland has the lowest house prices in Cambridgeshire, with the average house priced at £241,483 (UK HPI August 2023), 22% less than the national average. With close proximity to large Urban centres such as Cambridge and Peterborough, Fenland's population continues to grow. By 2043, it's expected that our population will have increased by 16% to 118,826 (ONS 2021).

In addition, 23,400 residents (23%) are aged over 64, above average compared to Cambridgeshire and the UK (ONS 2021). Alongside our partners, we are working to enable residents to access the support and resources they need to live happily, healthily and independently.

We also face some challenges around deprivation. We are the 80th (out of 317) most deprived area in the country (IMD: 2019). Nevertheless, we continue to work closely with our partner organisations to positively overcome these challenges.



# Our Priorities

Our Business Plan sets out the priorities we aim to deliver over the next 12 months. These priorities have been developed to address the most important needs of our communities and set a framework for how we will work towards our ambitions for the area and achieve our goal of creating a thriving place to live and visit.

Our core priorities focus on three areas: Communities, Environment and Economy. These priorities primarily focus on the statutory and wide variety of services that we provide day-to-day. In a typical year we empty 3 million bins, clean 210 square miles of town centres and open spaces, answer 60,000 telephone enquiries and determine 1,300 planning applications – and more!

A fourth priority, Quality Organisation, sits alongside everything we do. It aims to ensure that the Council runs effectively, transparently and sustainably. We invest in and support our workforce to ensure they have the skills and resources they need to work to the best of their ability.

Each priority is underpinned by a series of performance indicators, which are used to track progress, measure success, and identify areas for improvement. All performance indicators are reported to all elected Members at our Council meetings. These public reports are summarised to provide end of year performance updates against our priorities in our Annual Report, which is available to download on our website.

Where a priority does not have a linked performance indicator, usually where we work towards objectives with partners, updates will be reported via Portfolio Holder Briefings at Council meetings.

We also have a fifth cross cutting priority: Transformation Agenda. This priority encompasses our ongoing transformation work to improve efficiency and customer experience, drive positive change and ensure the Council is fit for the future.

## Summary of our Corporate Priorities

### Communities

- Support vulnerable members of our community
- Promote health and wellbeing for all
- Work with partners to promote Fenland through Culture and Heritage

### Environment

- Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service
- Work with partners and the community on projects that improve the environment and our street scene
- Work with partners to keep people safe in their neighbourhoods by reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and promoting social cohesion

### Economy

- Attract new businesses, jobs and opportunities whilst supporting our existing businesses in Fenland
- Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration across Fenland
- Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements across the district

# Transformation Agenda - Council for the Future

In 2019, we began our Transformation Agenda programme (TA1). This focussed on transforming the way the Council delivers all aspects of our services to our customers.

**TA1 is on track to deliver over £1m savings over the medium term.**

In order to assist with meeting our financial challenges and to continue to transform the Council, our Cabinet members have committed to building on the successes of our first Transformation Agenda programme, and to develop a second phase.

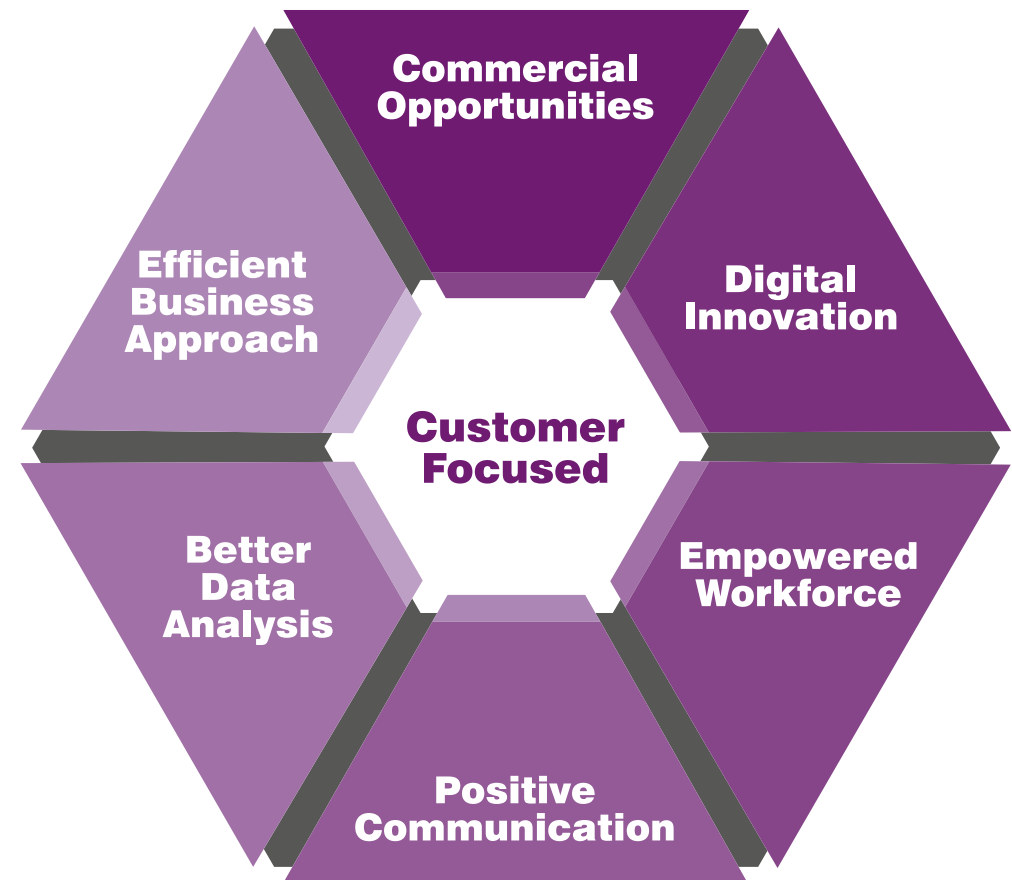
## Transformation Agenda 2 (TA2)

Spanning across all services within the council, the Transformation Agenda 2 programme ties together all major 'change' initiatives that are looking to improve how the council works and delivers services.

Whether this is reviewing a service, how systems support delivery or how staff are able to conduct their jobs in a more effective and flexible manner, the programme will aim to ensure we

are an effective and efficient Council for the future.

We have developed a number of key principles that will align with all future transformation projects and the TA2 programme.





# Transformation Service Reviews

A key focus of the Transformation Agenda 2 will be working with all services across the council in order to carry out service reviews. This holistic approach will ensure we maximise the opportunities, outlined below across the organisation;

- Efficiency
- Smarter ways of working
- Maximising the use of technology
- Enhanced customer experience
- Maximise opportunities for income generation

Key Service Reviews will be sponsored by our Cabinet Members as outlined below:

## Transformation Agenda 2

<b>Cllr Chris Boden</b> Finance Audit & Risk Accommodation Project	<b>Cllr Sam Hoy</b> Housing Options Private Sector Housing Licensing	<b>Cllr Peter Murphy</b> Environmental Services Park & Open Spaces
<b>Cllr Ian Benney</b> Property & Estates Marine Services Economic Growth	<b>Cllr Dee Laws</b> Planning Local Plan	<b>Cllr Chris Seaton</b> Transport Heritage
<b>Cllr Jan French</b> Benefits & Council Tax (ARP) Car Parking	<b>Cllr Alex Miscandlon</b> Leisure Internal Drainage Board (IDB)	<b>Cllr Steve Tierney</b> ICT My Fenland Policy & Communications
		<b>Cllr Susan Wallwork</b> Environmental Health Communities

# Partnership Investment in Fenland

We're working hard to attract the crucial external funding needed to unlock Fenland's potential and bolster its prosperity and resilience in the coming years.

Our previous policy of applying for any and all funding opportunities will now have to be tempered by any potential financial liability that the Council could face, particularly in respect of rising capital costs and the new requirement upon the s151 Officer to guarantee that the Council will meet any additional unanticipated costs when applying for some Government funding opportunities.

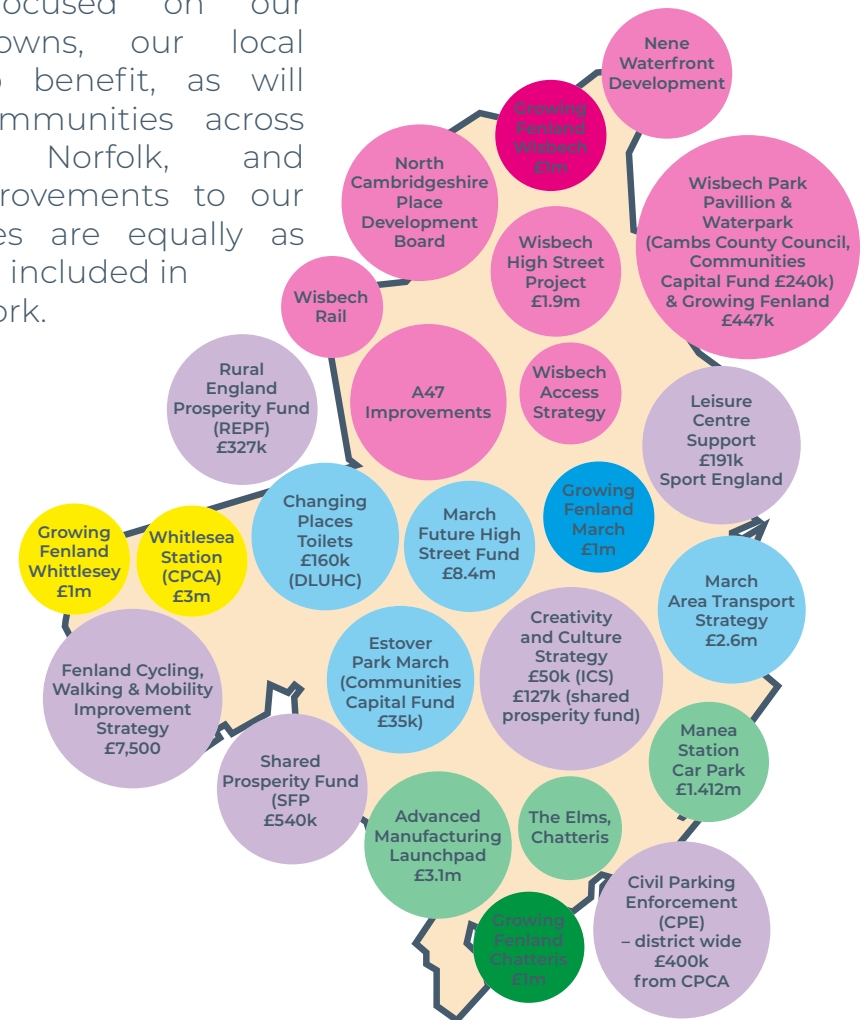
The diagram shows some of the projects currently in progress across the district thanks to millions of pounds worth of inward investment already secured.

The projects include development and regeneration of key sites, investment to improve transport and digital connectivity, and innovation and technology centres.

The opportunities will help to boost our economy, support new skills

opportunities, and create much-needed new jobs.

Although many of these funding schemes are focused on our four market towns, our local villages will also benefit, as will neighbouring communities across Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, and Lincolnshire. Improvements to our rural communities are equally as important and are included in our investment work.



# Our Priorities - Communities

## Support vulnerable members of our community

- Enable residents to claim the Council Tax Support they are entitled to.
- Enable residents to claim the Housing Benefit they are entitled to.
- Use our housing powers to improve the condition of private rented homes and ensure they are safe, secure and accessible.
- Use our housing powers to prevent homelessness and reduce rough sleeping.
- Use our housing powers to meet housing needs, including bringing empty homes back into use.
- Support residents to manage the effects of the cost of living. \*
- Encourage a range of partners to support the delivery of the Golden Age programme and support older people. \*

## Promote health and wellbeing for all

- Create healthier communities through activities developed and delivered by Active Fenland.

- Update the Council's Leisure Strategy in 2024 and work collaboratively with Freedom Leisure and other partners to deliver the Strategy. \*
- Work collaboratively within the Integrated Care System to tackle local health and wellbeing priorities to give people the information to enable them to make healthier choices. \*

## Work with partners to promote Fenland through Culture and Heritage

- Work with local stakeholders to deliver an action plan to support the aims of the Creativity and Culture Strategy.
- Provide proportionate support and advice for community groups to hold safe and successful public events. \*

\* FDC and Partners performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports

## FDC Performance Indicators

- Days taken to process new claims to changes for Council Tax Support
- Days taken to process new claims and changes for Housing Benefit
- Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues
- The proportion of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through housing options work
- Number of empty properties brought back into use
- Number of Active Fenland sessions delivered per year
- Customer satisfaction: Net promoter score for Freedom Leisure Centres
- Value of Arts Council Grants achieved in Fenland

# Our Priorities - Environment

## Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service

- Work with partners, the community and volunteers to divert at least 50% of Cambridgeshire's household waste from landfill.
- Maximise the value of materials collected for recycling, including through Getting It Sorted recycling champions.
- Deliver an effective, self-funding Garden Waste collection service.
- Deliver clean streets and public spaces as set out in the national code of practice.
- Work with key stakeholders to deliver an effective waste partnership and update the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Strategy. \*

## Work with partners and the community on projects to improve the environment and streetscene

- Use education, guidance and Council powers to fairly enforce environmental standards and tackle issues such as fly-tipping, illegal parking, dog fouling, littering and antisocial behaviour.
- Ensure well maintained parks and open spaces by working with our grounds maintenance contractor.

- Supporting community groups such as Street Pride, In Bloom, Friends of Groups, and Green Dog Walkers.
- Work with Town Councils and the community to provide local markets and thriving market town community events.
- Deliver the council's carbon reduction and climate adaptation plan including meeting all climate change targets which are legally required by the UK Government.

## Work with partners to keep people safe in their neighbourhoods by reducing crime & antisocial behaviour and promoting social cohesion

- Manage the Community Safety Partnership to reduce crime, hate crime and anti-social behaviour. \*
- Support the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum to deliver the Fenland-wide Community Cohesion Action Plan. \*
- Deliver the Community Safety Grant Agreement with the Police and Crime Commissioner. \*

\* FDC and Partners performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports

## FDC Performance Indicators

- % of household waste recycled through the blue bin service
- Customer satisfaction with our Refuse and Recycling services
- Customer satisfaction with our Garden Waste service
- % of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards
- % of Rapid or Village response requests (to action issues such as fly-tipping, dog fouling and littering) actioned the same day
- Number of Street Pride, In Bloom, Friends of Groups and Green Dog Walkers community environmental events supported
- % of those asked satisfied with community events
- % of local businesses who said they were supported and treated fairly

# Our Priorities - Economy

## Attract new businesses, jobs and opportunities whilst supporting our existing businesses

- Provide responsive business support to encourage business growth, job diversity, skills development and increased access to grants. \*
- Promote and develop our Business Premises at South Fens, The Boathouse and Light Industrial Estates to encourage investment, business development, job creation and skills diversification.
- Work with external stakeholders, local businesses and the Combined Authority to attract inward investment and establish new business opportunities. \*

## Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration

- Enable appropriate growth, development and infrastructure through delivering a proactive and effective Planning service.
- Drive forward the development and delivery of new homes and commercial space by using our surplus property and land assets to deliver sustainable economic and residential growth.

- Work with our partners to enable new affordable housing to meet housing needs. \*
- Identify and bid for external funding that aligns with and supports our housing, economic and growth objectives. \*

## Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements

- Promote sustainable road, rail and concessionary transport initiatives to improve access to employment and local services. \*
- Engage with the Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council on the feasibility and delivery of major road and rail infrastructure projects. \*
- Work with the Combined Authority to influence how housing and infrastructure funding is used to stimulate housing development and economic growth in the district. \*

\* FDC and Partners performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports

## FDC Performance Indicators

- % occupancy of Business Premises estates
- % occupancy of our Wisbech Yacht Harbour
- % of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks
- % of minor applications determined in 8 weeks
- % of other applications determined in 8 weeks

# Our Priorities - Quality Organisation

## Performance Management (Performance Indicators)

- Set relevant and robust performance targets to ensure the effective delivery of Business Plan priorities.
- Report regularly on service performance to the Corporate Management Team, Councillors and the public.

## Excellent Customer Service

- Maintain our Customer Service Excellence accreditation to ensure we continue to deliver the most effective service to our communities.
- Help residents to self-serve and access our services digitally to allow us to provide greater support for vulnerable customers and complex queries.

## Governance, Financial Control and Risk Management

- Maintain robust and effective financial standards, internal controls and organisational management.
- Comply with data protection and General Data Protection Regulation requirements.

## Transformation and Efficiency

- Sustainably deliver required savings whilst pursuing transformation and commercialisation opportunities to ensure the organisation is fit for the future.
- Engage with the Combined Authority's Public Service Reform agenda. \*

## Consultation and Engagement

- Appropriately consult with residents about our service and proposals as outlined in our Consultation Strategy.

## Equalities

- Meet our Public Sector Equality duty by delivering the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act and 1998 Human Rights Act through our core service delivery and publication of a statutory Annual Equality Report.

## Asset Management and Commercialisation

- Ensure our asset base is sustainable, suitable and fully utilised to maximise income opportunities and financial efficiencies.

## FDC Performance Indicators

- % of customer queries responded at first point of contact
- % of customers satisfied by our service
- Contact Centre calls answered within 20 seconds
- Contact Centre calls handled
- % of Council Tax collected
- Council Tax net collection fund receipts
- % national non-domestic rates (NNDR) (Business Rates) collected
- National non-domestic rates (NNDR) (Business Rates) net collection fund receipts

# Our Priorities - Quality Organisation

- Deliver our adopted Capital Programme in line with our Corporate Asset Management Plan to maintain the integrity and safety of our assets.
- Work jointly with public, private and third sector partners to improve access to our services, including from co-located facilities. \*
- Continue with our Commercial Investment Strategy to make informed decisions about the purchase and management of property assets through Fenland Future Limited.

## Workforce Development

- Equip our workforce with the right skills to effectively deliver our priorities.
- Support and empower our staff to make effective decisions.

## Enforcement

- Use a fair and proportionate approach to improve living, working and environmental standards as set out in our Enforcement Policies.

## Health and Safety

- Maintain effective Health and Safety systems to comply with relevant legislation and local requirements.
- Deliver all aspects of the Council's Health and Safety action plan to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our workforce, partners and wider community.

\* FDC and Partners performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports

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## Appendix 1


### Corporate Priorities / Performance Indicators


**Key:**

**Priority column** = Corporate priority

**Sub priority column** =  FDC only sub priority

=  FDC & partners sub priority

**O&S recommendation** =  FDC only performance measure including frequency

=  FDC & partners performance measure by RAG status and PHB updates

Priority	Sub priority	O&S Recommendation
<b>Communities</b>	<b>Support vulnerable members of our community</b>	
	Enable residents to claim the Housing Benefit they are entitled to through our shared service (Anglia Revenues Partnership; ARP).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Days taken to process new claims to changes for Council Tax Support (monthly).</li> </ul>
	Enable residents to claim the Council Tax Support they are entitled to through our shared service (Anglia Revenues Partnership; ARP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Days taken to process new claims and changes for Housing Benefit (monthly).</li> </ul>
	Support residents to manage the effects of the cost of living.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAG rating &amp; PHB updates of cost of living event feedback.</li> </ul>
	Use our housing powers to prevent homelessness, reduce rough sleeping, meet housing needs, improve housing conditions and keep homes safe and accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues (monthly).</li> <li>The proportion of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through housing options work (monthly).</li> <li>Number of empty properties brought back into use (monthly).</li> </ul>

	Encourage a range of partners to support the delivery of the Golden Age programme and support older people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAG rating &amp; PHB updates of Golden Age events and feedback.</li> </ul>
<b>Promote health and wellbeing for all</b>		
	Update the Council's Leisure Strategy in 2023 and work collaboratively with Freedom Leisure and other partners to deliver the Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAG rating &amp; PHB updates</li> </ul>
	Work collaboratively within the Integrated Care Partnership to tackle local health and wellbeing priorities to give people the information to enable them to make healthier choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAG rating &amp; PHB updates</li> </ul>
	Create healthier communities through activities developed by Active Fenland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of Active Fenland sessions delivered per year (monthly).</li> </ul>
<b>Work with partners to promote Fenland through Culture and Heritage</b>		
	Work with local stakeholders to deliver an action plan to support the aims of the Creativity and Culture Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAG rating &amp; PHB updates</li> <li>Value of Art's Council Grants achieved in Fenland (annual).</li> </ul>
	Proportionate support and advice for community groups to hold safe and successful public events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAG rating &amp; PHB updates of SAG event feedback.</li> </ul>

Priority	Sub priority	O&S Recommendation
<b>Environment</b>	<b>Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service</b>	
	Work with partners, the community and volunteers to divert at least 50% of Cambridgeshire's household waste from landfill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amend 50% target when nature of the new national indicators published (monthly)</li> </ul>
	Maximise the value of materials collected for recycling, including through Getting It Sorted Recycling Champions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Income from Extender Producer Responsibilities (annual – when introduced)</li> </ul>
	Deliver our effective, self-funding Garden Waste collection service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAG rating &amp; PHB updates on current costs</li> <li>Customer satisfaction (annual)</li> </ul>
	Deliver clean streets and public spaces as set out in the national code of practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep Britain Tidy methodology for percentage of clean streets (monthly)</li> </ul>
	Work with key stakeholders to deliver an effective waste partnership and update the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAG rating &amp; PHB updates (including new details from Defra)</li> </ul>
	<b>Work with partners and the community on projects to improve the environment and streetscene</b>	
	Use education, guidance and Council powers to fairly enforce environmental standards and tackle issues such as fly tipping, illegal parking, dog fouling, littering and antisocial behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current Service Level PI's &amp; PHB updates (monthly)</li> </ul>

	<p>Ensure well maintained open spaces by working with our grounds maintenance contractor.</p> <p>Supporting community groups such as Street Pride, In Bloom, Green Dog Walkers and Friends of Groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As per contract with Tivoli</li> <li>Current Service Level PI's &amp; PHB updates (monthly)</li> </ul>
	<p>Work with Town Councils and the community to provide local markets and market town events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current Service Level PI's &amp; PHB updates (quarterly)</li> </ul>
<b>Work with partners to keep people safe in their neighbourhoods by reducing crime &amp; antisocial behaviour and promoting social cohesion</b>		
	<p>Manage the Community Safety Partnership to reduce crime, hate crime and anti-social behaviour</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAG rating &amp; PHB updates</li> </ul>
	<p>Support the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum to deliver the Fenland-wide Community Cohesion Action Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAG rating &amp; PHB updates</li> </ul>
	<p>Deliver the Community Safety Grant Agreement with the Police and Crime Commissioner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAG rating &amp; PHB updates</li> </ul>
<b>Priority</b>	<b>Sub priority</b>	<b>O&amp;S Recommendation</b>
<b>Economy</b>	<b>Attract new businesses, jobs and opportunities whilst supporting our existing businesses</b>	
	<p>Work with external stakeholders, local businesses and the Combined Authority to attract inward investment and establish new business opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Growth Strategy &amp; PHB updates</li> </ul>
	<p>Provide responsive business support to encourage business growth, job diversity, skills development and increased grants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value grants funding</li> </ul>


	Promote and develop our Business Premises at South Fens, The Boathouse and Light Industrial Estates to encourage investment, business development, job creation and skills diversification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % occupancy of Business Premises estates (monthly).</li> </ul>
	<b>Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration</b>	
	Enable appropriate growth, development and infrastructure through delivering a proactive and effective Planning service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Monitoring Report (annual) &amp; PHB update</li> </ul>
	Drive forward the development and delivery of new homes and commercial space by using our surplus property and land assets to deliver sustainable economic and residential growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks (monthly).</li> <li>• % of minor applications determined in 8 weeks (monthly).</li> <li>• % of other applications determined in 8 weeks (monthly).</li> </ul>
	Identify and bid for external funding that aligns with and supports our housing, economic and growth objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RAG rating &amp; PHB updates (including projects applied for, rejected and projects on the 'shelf')</li> </ul>
	<b>Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements</b>	
	Promote sustainable road, rail and concessionary transport initiatives to improve access to employment and local services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RAG rating &amp; PHB updates</li> </ul>
	Engage with the Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council on the feasibility and delivery of major road and rail infrastructure projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RAG rating &amp; PHB updates</li> </ul>

	Work with the Combined Authority to influence how housing and infrastructure funding is used to stimulate housing development and economic growth in the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RAG rating &amp; PHB updates</li> </ul>
<b>Priority</b>	<b>Sub priority</b>	<b>O&amp;S Recommendation</b>
<b>Quality Organisation</b>	<b>Governance, Financial Control and Risk Management</b>	
	Maintain robust and effective financial standards, internal controls and organisational management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean bill of health from external audit (annual) via PHB update</li> </ul>
	Comply with data protection and General Data Protection Regulation requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data breaches reported to the ICO (annual) via PHB update</li> </ul>
<b>Transformation and Efficiency</b>		
	Sustainably deliver required savings whilst pursuing transformation and commercialisation opportunities to ensure the organisation is fit for the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievements against transformation project objectives via PHB updates</li> </ul>
	Engage with the Combined Authority's Public Service Reform agenda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RAG rating &amp; PHB updates</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Management</b>		
	Set relevant and robust performance targets to ensure the effective delivery of Business Plan priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covered by all Corporate Performance Indicators via PHB updates</li> </ul>
	Report regularly on service performance to the Corporate Management Team, Councillors and the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covered by all Corporate Performance Indicators via PHB updates</li> </ul>

<b>Consultation and Engagement</b>		
Appropriately consult with residents about our service and proposals as outlined in our Consultation Strategy.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual consultation plan to be coordinated and shared with key stakeholders, including Town &amp; Parish Council's. Monthly updates via PHB.</li> </ul>
<b>Excellent Customer Service</b>		
Maintain our Customer Service Excellence accreditation to ensure we continue to deliver the most effective service to our communities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer Service Excellence report (annual). Update via PHB</li> </ul>
Help residents to self-serve and access our services digitally to allow us to provide greater support for vulnerable customers and complex queries.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total number of web hits and online forms (monthly).</li> <li>Number of online forms submitted via FDC Website (monthly).</li> </ul>
<b>Equalities</b>		
Meet our Public Sector Equality duty by delivering the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act and 1998 Human Rights Act through our core service delivery and publication of a statutory Annual Equality Report.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equality Report (annual). Update via PHB</li> </ul>
<b>Asset Management and Commercialisation</b>		
Ensure our asset base is sustainable, suitable and fully utilised to maximise income opportunities and financial efficiencies.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial Occupancy and Rent arrears (monthly).</li> </ul>
Deliver our adopted Capital Programme in line with our Corporate Asset Management Plan to maintain the integrity and safety of our assets.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAG status &amp; PHB updates</li> </ul>
Work jointly with public, private and third sector partners to improve access to our services, including from co-located facilities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAG status &amp; PHB updates</li> </ul>

	Continue with our Commercial Investment Strategy to make informed decisions about the purchase and management of property assets through Fenland Future Limited.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measured by MTFS progress &amp; PHB updates</li> </ul>
	<b>Workforce Development</b>	
	Equip our workforce with the right skills to effectively deliver our priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSE accreditation in workforce development sections (annual) &amp; PHB updates</li> <li>Number of apprenticeships (annual) &amp; PHB updates</li> </ul>
	Support and empower our staff to make effective decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff survey (bi-annual) &amp; PHB updates</li> </ul>
	<b>Enforcement</b>	
	Use a fair and proportionate approach to improve living, working and environmental standards as set out in our Enforcement Policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of enforcement cases satisfactory resolved via PHB updates</li> </ul>
	<b>Health and Safety</b>	
	Maintain effective Health and Safety systems to comply with relevant legislation and local requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health and Safety Report (annual) &amp; PHB updates</li> <li>Audit and Risk Report (annual) &amp; PHB updates</li> </ul>
	Deliver all aspects of the Council's Health and Safety action plan to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our workforce, partners and wider community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As above</li> </ul>



Agenda Item No:	6	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	18 December 2023	
Report Title:	Revised General Fund Budget and Capital Programme 2023/24; Draft General Fund Budget Estimates 2024/25 and Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024/25 to 2028/29; Capital Programme 2024 - 2027	

## Cover sheet:

### 1 Purpose / Summary

To consider and approve:

- the revised General Fund Budget and Capital Programme for 2023/24;
- the Draft General Fund Budget Estimates 2024/25 and the Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2028/29 for consultation;
- Capital Programme 2024-2027.

### 2 Key issues

- The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement announcement is expected week commencing 18 December 2023. **Consequently, until the details of the Finance Settlement have been received, the figures detailed in this report should be treated as being provisional.**
- In accordance with the decision of Council at their meeting of 17 July 2023 (Minute C8/23), the cash amount of Council Tax raised has been kept at the current level for 2024/25 and over the MTFS period rather than the 0% increase previously adopted by Council in July 2019.
- Council Tax Referendum limits for 2024/25 will be set at an increase of 3% or £5 whichever is the higher.
- Current forecasts for 2024/25 show a shortfall of £539k based on the assumptions detailed in Appendix C. This shortfall increases to £2.558m in 2028/29.
- At this time, more detailed work is required on a number of issues which could potentially impact on these figures, both positively and negatively (as detailed in paragraph 7.11 of the report). Further information is expected over the next few weeks and this will be incorporated where possible, into the final budget report in February 2024.
- Although there are currently many uncertainties regarding the budget for 2024/25 and the MTFS, there remains a significant structural deficit which the Council will need to address.
- The final deficits for 2023/24 and 2024/25 will have to be funded from Council reserves (current balances shown in Appendix E). At this stage, due to the many uncertainties around the potential deficits, there is no requirement to formally approve any amounts to be funded from reserves.

- An updated Capital Programme for 2023/24 and for the medium term 2024-27 is proposed.
- Further work is required on the potential new capital schemes identified in Appendix D(ii) and the final proposals will be considered as part of the final budget report in February 2024.

### 3 Recommendations

- It is recommended that:-
  - (i) the draft budget proposals for 2024/25 outlined in this report be approved for consultation;
  - (ii) the revised General Fund Budget and revised Capital Programme for 2023/24 be approved;
  - (iii) the proposed Capital Programme for 2024-2027 be approved.

<b>Wards Affected</b>	All
<b>Portfolio Holder(s)</b>	Cllr Chris Boden, Leader and Portfolio Holder, Finance
<b>Report Originator(s)</b>	Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer (S.151 Officer) Mark Saunders, Chief Accountant
<b>Contact Officer(s)</b>	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer (S.151 Officer) Mark Saunders, Chief Accountant
<b>Background Paper(s)</b>	Provisional Finance settlement – Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC). Autumn Statement 2023 (HM Treasury) Medium Term Financial Strategy working papers. Government announcements since February 2023.

## Report:

### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report sets out the financial implications of the council's priorities described in the draft Business Plan 2024/25. Revenue budget estimates are draft at this stage and along with the draft Business Plan will be subject to public and stakeholder consultation prior to final budget and council tax setting for 2024/25 in February 2024.
- 1.2 Much of the financial information provided is necessarily based on a number of assumptions which are wholly or partly influenced by external factors. Some of these factors, such as the outcome of the Local Government Finance Settlement, and the impact of Business Rates Retention arrangements incorporating the effect of the multiplier changes, will not be known until later in the process and any amendments will be reported to Cabinet and Council at the February 2024 budget setting meeting.

### 2 AUTUMN STATEMENT 2023

- 2.1 On 22 November 2023, the Chancellor delivered his Autumn Statement confirming the Government's spending plans for 2024-25.
- 2.2 The relevant points for this Council from these announcements are as follows:

#### **Council Tax**

- A Council Tax referendum limit of up to 3% (or £5 whichever is the higher), together with an additional 2% increase for authorities with responsibilities for Adult Social Care (the same as for 2023/24).

#### **Business Rates**

- **Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief (RHL)** will continue in 2024/25 with the level of relief continuing at 75% with a maximum of £110,000 per business. Local authorities will be compensated in the usual way through S31 grants;
- **The small business rates multiplier in 2024/25 will be frozen** (currently 49.9p which normally would increase in line with the CPI rate as at September 2023, ie.6.62%), while **the standard multiplier will be updated by September CPI to 54.6p** (from 51.2p currently). Local authorities will be fully compensated for the decision to freeze the small business multiplier;
- De-coupling the multipliers for 2024/25 will impact on the Council's Business Rates Baseline and the Baseline Funding Level which could potentially have either a positive or negative impact on the Council's overall business rates income, although the intention is for the changes to be financially neutral;
- A further distribution of the surplus from the national Levy Account is likely (£100m in 2023/24 in respect of 2022/23 and likely to be at least that amount in the 2024/25 settlement). The individual allocations to authorities (if any) will be detailed in the provisional settlement. The last surplus distribution in 2022/23 (in respect of 2021/22) resulted in an additional £31k allocation for Fenland.

#### **Local Authority Housing Fund**

- There will be a further £450m for a third round of the Local Authority Housing Fund to deliver 2,400 new housing units nationally to house Afghan refugees and ease wider housing and homelessness pressures.

## Core Spending Power and Other Announcements

- There will be cash-terms growth in Core Spending Power (CSP) in 2024/25 because of the increases in social care funding and Band D thresholds. Growth is likely to be less than inflation, however.
  - Full details of the allocation of funding within CSP will be announced later this month in the 2024/25 Finance Settlement. There are still a number of issues remaining to be resolved, even though there is unlikely to be a change in the overall allocations announced as part of last year's settlement. Decisions will have to be made about the Services Grant, Core Spending Power Guarantee Grant and the New Homes Bonus.
  - Local government funding reforms (Fair Funding Review and business rates retention changes) are not likely until at least 2025/26;
  - A decision about the future of the New Homes Bonus (NHB) was promised before the provisional settlement but none has yet been released. We are expecting that there will be one more further year of NHB in 2024/25 but this is not confirmed;
- 2.3 Details of how this will be converted into specific funding allocations for individual local authorities will be announced as part of the provisional local government finance settlement which is expected week commencing 18 December 2023.

## 3 LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT

- 3.1 The Provisional Finance Settlement for 2024/25 is expected to be announced during the week commencing 18 December 2023. Consequently, the figures included in this report are estimates based on previous funding announcements. It is therefore, almost certain that the figures announced in the Provisional Settlement will be different from those detailed in this report. An update on any changes will be given to members as soon as they are available.
- 3.2 For the purposes of this report, it has been assumed that the Council's overall Settlement Funding Assessment for 2024/25 (Revenue Support Grant, Business Rates Baseline Funding and Tariff Payments) together with the Services Grant and Core Spending Power Guarantee Grant will remain the same as 2023/24. The figures included in the draft budget are detailed below.

**Table 1 – Settlement Funding Assessment (Core Funding) – Estimate prior to provisional settlement**

	<b>Actual 2023/24 £000</b>	<b>Estimate 2023/24 £000</b>	<b>2024/25 % Increase</b>
<b>Settlement Funding Assessment</b>			
<b>Revenue Support Grant (RSG)</b>	173	173	0.0%
<b>Business Rates income</b>	11,207	11,207	
<b>Tariff Payment to government</b>	<u>-7,367</u>	<u>-7,367</u>	
<b>Business Rates Baseline Funding</b>	3,840	3,840	0.0%
<b>Services Grant</b>	150	150	0.0%
<b>Core Spending Power Guarantee Grant</b>	601	601	0.0%

- 3.3 Business Rates Baseline Finding levels for 2024/25 will be updated to take into account the de-coupling of the multiplier increase as detailed in paragraph 2.2 above. At this time, it is not possible to determine what impact this will have on the Council's overall Business Rates income although the intention is that this change will be financially neutral.
- 3.4 The RSG, Services Grant and CSP guarantee grant will all change in the provisional settlement although the figures in this report assume no overall change in the total allocations.
- 3.5 The Medium Term forecasts detailed in Appendix B have also assumed a continuation of the policy of increasing business rates baselines by CPI inflation from 2025/26 onwards, based on current Treasury forecasts over the medium term.

### **Fair Funding Review**

- 3.6 Local government funding reforms (Fair Funding Review or business rates retention changes) will not now happen until at least 2025/26.

## **4 NEW HOMES BONUS**

- 4.1 As mentioned earlier, a decision about the future of the New Homes Bonus (NHB) was promised before the provisional settlement but none has yet been released. We are expecting that there will be one more further year of NHB in 2024/25 but this is not confirmed.
- 4.2 Actual NHB received in 2023/24 was £369k and an estimate of £440k has been included for 2024/25 (calculation based on the increase in dwelling numbers between October 2022 – October 2023).
- 4.3 We wait to see what the Provisional Finance Settlement includes (if anything) for New Homes Bonus allocations for 2024/25.
- 4.4 The Future of the New Homes Bonus is very uncertain. The current national total of £291m allocated by way of NHB may also change in future spending reviews. There is however expected to be some form of housing growth incentive scheme. The impact on this Council's funding could be significant. We have included £440k of NHB funding in the MTFS from 2025/26 onwards. These could be replaced by allocations we receive from whatever the new Housing Incentive system will look like.
- 4.5 **The lack of clarity around the future of the NHB is a significant risk to the MTFS.**

## **5 BUSINESS RATES**

- 5.1 Members will be aware that the Business Rates Retention system was introduced in April 2013. Under this system, authorities would benefit if their actual Business Rates income collected in a year was higher than the baseline funding determined by government.
- 5.2 There has been real business rates growth in Fenland over the last seven years, however how this impacts on the resources available to this Council is complex, due to the rules and the operation of the current 50% Business Rates Retention system. The complexity of the system has been exacerbated by the number of business rates relief schemes and multiplier caps and freezes implemented by the government over the last few years.

## **Business Rates Pooling Arrangement – 2023/24 and 2024/25**

### **2023/24 Pool**

- 5.3 The Council has joined with the County Council, Peterborough City Council, Fire Authority, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire to become part of a pooling arrangement for business rates since 2020/21 up to and including 2023/24. Unlike the Business Rates Pilot schemes, this is not a bidding process against other pools but is part of the existing system whereby authorities can choose to apply to become a pool with the agreement of the constituent authorities.
- 5.4 The benefit of being in a pool is that authorities will not be liable to levy payments on their business rates growth, which is then shared amongst the pooled authorities by a mutually agreed method. This will be based on where the growth has originated from with an appropriate share allocated to the County Council and Fire Authority.
- 5.5 Depending on actual business rates received in 2023/24, the net effect of the pooling arrangement could be considerable for the authorities in the pool. Current forecasts indicate that this Council could receive up to £450k additional income according to the sharing methodology agreed between the pooled authorities.

### **2024/25 Pool**

- 5.6 As a result of further detailed analysis of forecast business rates income, the current pool members decided that the most financially beneficial arrangement for 2024/25 would be a pool without Fenland. As recompense for not being in the pool, agreement has been reached with the other pool members that Fenland would be no worse off as a result of the revised pooling arrangement for 2024/25.
- 5.7 Consequently, an amount of £350k per annum has been included in 2024/25 as a 'pooling' benefit. This will be firmed up over the coming weeks as all authorities in the pool complete the annual statutory business rates estimate, the NNDR1 form, due to be returned to MHCLG by the end of January 2024. This Council's estimated share of any additional resources will then be calculated and included in the final budget report in February 2024.
- 5.8 There will be no further major changes to the rates retention system until 2025/26 at least. Consequently, assuming the proposed pooling and 'no detriment' arrangements to this Council continue, an amount of £350k per annum has been included in the MTFs as a pooling benefit to this Council.

### **Business Rates Reform – 2025/26 onwards**

- 5.9 As stated earlier, no major changes will take place until 2025/26 at least. At that time, it is likely that the Baseline Funding Level of all Councils will be reset with all 'growth' income being taken into account nationally and redistributed in the new system. In the estimate for 2024/25 and the medium term forecasts, around £1.3m of business rates above the Council's Baseline Funding Level is being retained. Under a baseline reset, this would mean that initially the additional £1.3m business rates income would be removed and redistributed. What remains unclear, is how much of this £1.3m will be returned to the Council as part of its recalculated Baseline Funding Level.
- 5.10 In theory therefore, the Council could lose all of this additional £1.3m in the absolute worst case scenario. However, this is unlikely and would create significant volatility within future funding allocations nationally, which the government does not wish to see. There will also undoubtedly be some kind of transitional arrangements which

would also limit the extent of any gains and losses in funding arising from the new system.

- 5.11 Although it is extremely difficult to exemplify the impact of this redistribution, in broad terms, if the Council were to lose 50% of its growth income then this would add a further £650k per annum from 2025/26 to the current forecast MTFS shortfalls. A 20% loss of growth income would add a further £260k per annum to the current shortfalls.
- 5.12 In addition, the current system of retaining 100% of business rates from businesses generating Renewable Energy (estimated £1.416m in 2024/25) and the benefits from current pooling arrangements (estimated £350k in 2024/25) could also be reviewed and amended.
- 5.13 **At the time of writing, the Fair Funding Review, the implementation of Business Rates Reform and the changes to the New Homes Bonus are all major risk areas for this Council over the medium term.**

## **6 FORECAST OUTTURN 2023/24**

- 6.1 The approved budget set by Council in February 2023, showed a balanced budget without any funding required from either the Budget Equalisation Reserve or the General Fund Balance.
- 6.2 The latest projected outturn for 2023/24 is set out at Appendix A and show the likelihood of a shortfall in the region of £707k by the end of this financial year.
- 6.3 There have been numerous significant variations during this year to date which have contributed to the projected shortfall.
- 6.4 The main additional cost variations compared with the February 2023 budget include the following:
- Increase in net additional cost of the difference between Housing Benefit paid and subsidy reclaimed from DWP of £204k. Officers are progressing a number of initiatives to increase the amount of subsidy reclaimed;
  - £410k of additional staffing costs of the Planning service due to the difficulties in recruiting and retaining employed staff and the necessity to engage contract/agency staff. An enhanced recruitment and retention package has recently been agreed by Employment Committee to attract more employed staff and reduce the reliance on agency staff;
  - £41k of additional staffing costs of Marine Services, mainly relating to the Pilotage Service;
  - Lower Marine Services income of £171k due to a significant reduction in ship numbers at both Wisbech Port (Statutory and Commercial Fees) and Port Sutton Bridge (Statutory Fees only);
  - £88k of increased costs of Council Transport (Refuse, cleansing vehicles etc) consisting of £36k additional staffing costs and £52k of additional running costs (repairs, parts etc);
  - £69k of additional staffing costs of Economic Estates Services, mainly relating to the use of contract/agency staff to fill vacancies;
  - Net additional cost of £47k for providing temporary accommodation for homeless persons. The current programme of purchasing houses for temporary

accommodation using funding from Round 2 of the Local Authority Housing Fund together with additional properties leased from Clarion HA will be beneficial in future years in reducing this cost;

- £117k of additional cost relating to the Household Dry Recycling service, consisting of £61k of additional gate fees (charged on 'contaminated' recycled waste) and £56k lower recycling credits. The gate fees are expected to increase significantly in 2024/25 as a result of the new recycling contract;
- £120k of additional ICT hardware maintenance (£11k), software licences (£93k) and telephony costs (£16k);
- £102k of additional external legal fees mainly relating to costs associated with the Wisbech Incinerator planning application (£42k) and costs associated with the tender for the new dry recycling contract (£40k);
- £179k increase for the pay award for 2023/24 (£1,925 flat rate increase for NJC staff and 3.88% for others which equates to a 1.4% additional increase compared to a budgeted 4% increase).

6.5 To off-set these additional cost increases, there has been a number of higher income variances including the following:

- £151k net reduction in IDB Levies (additional grant income of £177k off-set by £26k of additional levies);
- £191k of additional government support for energy costs at the Leisure Centres;
- Additional income from a variety of services
  - £20k from Planning Fees, arising from the increase in planning fees from 6 December 2023;
  - £25k from Garden Waste Subscriptions;
  - £26k from Economic Estates;
  - £16k from Cemeteries;
- £445k additional investment income arising from higher cash balances, higher investment interest rates and higher interest recharge to Fenland Future Ltd;

6.6 There are still many uncertainties around the potential shortfall for 2023/24 and there is no requirement at this time to formally approve an amount to be funded from reserves. At the present time, Corporate Management Team, Senior Managers and the Accountancy Team are managing and monitoring the position carefully and will continue to review spending levels to ensure where possible, the amount to be funded from reserves at the year-end is minimised.

6.7 Use of reserves to fund any potential shortfall in 2023/24 will have a consequential impact on the Council's ability to fund the shortfall in 2024/25 from reserves. Details of the Council's reserves are at Section 10 and Appendix E.



## 7 DRAFT BUDGET ESTIMATES 2024/25 AND MTFS

- 7.1 The Council's MTFS has to ensure that the commitments made in the Business Plan are funded not only in the year for which formal approval of the budget is required (2024/25) but for forecast years as well, within a reasonable level of tolerance.
- 7.2 The impact of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement (expected to be announced during week commencing 18 December 2023) will also need to be clarified and the figures in this report make no assumptions about any potential changes to government funding.
- 7.3 The Council's medium term forecasts are shown at Appendix B and summarised in Table 2 below. The table includes for Council Tax income to remain at its' current level from 2024/25 onwards.

**Table 2 - MTFS – Council Tax income constant level from 2024/25 onwards**

	Estimate	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Net Service Expenditure	16,574	16,591	16,682	16,822	17,001
Corporate Items	1,499	1,744	1,775	1,859	2,066
Contribution to/from(-) Earmarked Reserves	-628	-88	-88	-88	-88
<b>Net Expenditure (before use of balances)</b>	<b>17,445</b>	<b>18,247</b>	<b>18,369</b>	<b>18,593</b>	<b>18,979</b>
<b>Funding</b>					
Revenue Support Grant	-173	-173	-173	-173	-173
Business Rates Funding ( <i>detailed in Appendix B</i> )	-7,778	-8,064	-8,125	-8,195	-8,271
Business Rates Collection Fund Surplus(-)	-970	0	0	0	0
Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus(-)	-58	-50	-50	-50	-50
Council Tax ( <i>cash level constant from 24/25 onwards</i> )	-7,927	-7,927	-7,927	-7,927	-7,927
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>-16,906</b>	<b>-16,214</b>	<b>-16,275</b>	<b>-16,345</b>	<b>-16,421</b>
<b>Shortfall(+) before use of balances</b>	<b>+539</b>	<b>+2,033</b>	<b>+2,094</b>	<b>+2,248</b>	<b>+2,558</b>
Contribution to/from(-) Budget Equalisation and/or General Reserve	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Shortfall(+) after use of balances</b>	<b>+539</b>	<b>+2,033</b>	<b>+2,094</b>	<b>+2,248</b>	<b>+2,558</b>

- 7.4 Government support for 2024/25 will be announced as part of the provisional finance settlement. This Council currently receives retained business rates and a small amount of Revenue Support Grant from the finance settlement. The projections for 2024/25 onwards are based on the best estimates and information available and are consistent with the announcements in the Autumn Statement 2023. However, subject to further clarity on the detailed implementation of the announcements there remains significant uncertainty in these projections.
- 7.5 The net budget requirement for 2024/25 is currently estimated at **£17.445m** after all identified savings, contingencies and reserve transfers are included. This includes the assumptions detailed at Appendix C. With the provisional funding assumptions and Council Tax income remaining at current levels, a **shortfall of £539k** is currently forecast for 2024/25.

- 7.6 The estimates for 2024/25 have benefited from a significant estimated surplus on the Business Rates Collection Fund account at the end of 2023/24. This surplus of £969k is a result of a significant decrease in the appeals provision required in 2023/24. There will always be an estimated surplus or deficit relating to the Business Rates Collection Fund in a particular year which is then included in the following years estimates (included in the 2023/24 estimates was a deficit of £211k). Without this significant one-off surplus, the estimates for 2024/25 would be showing a shortfall of £1.508m.
- 7.7 The development of the Commercial and Investment Strategy has the potential to generate additional significant returns over the MTFS. Currently, recharges to Fenland Future Ltd (FFL) for officer time, loan interest receipts and future dividends from current FFL developments have been included in the forecasts at Appendix A and B. These are based on the current business plan of FFL over the next three years. Additional returns may also be realised depending on the type and timing of investment opportunities. These are however limited at the current time due to high interest rates and the current policy of the PWLB not to lend for purely investment for yield projects. Consequently, no allowance for any further potential returns (over and above the recharges, loan interest and dividends from FFL) have been included in the MTFS at the current time.
- 7.8 As mentioned in Section 6 above, officers are progressing a number of initiatives to increase the amount of Housing Benefit subsidy reclaimed and together with the anticipated reduction in temporary accommodation costs (partly resulting from the additional houses purchased with assistance from the Local Authority Housing Fund), a significant increase in subsidy reclaimed and lower temporary accommodation costs of £370k has been included in the estimates for 2024/25.
- 7.9 Members will be aware that the Transformation Agenda 2 (TA2) programme is now underway and together with the Accommodation Review, is critical in achieving the necessary savings over the course of the MTFS. An amount of £270k has currently been included in the 2024/25 estimates as savings from the TA2 programme, increasing to £372k per annum by 2028/29. Significant savings over and above these will be required from this programme over the MTFS period.
- 7.10 Taking into account the proposals in the Table 2 above, the estimated net budget requirement in 2024/25 is detailed in Appendix A. The level of forecast resources available to the Council and the estimated levels of expenditure over the medium term are set out in detail in Appendix B. These show a funding gap of £2.558m by the end of 2028/29.
- 7.11 There is still considerable uncertainty around the estimates for 2024/25 and the forecasts for the medium term. Currently there are a number of 'unknowns' which could both positively and negatively impact on the forecasts including:

**Risks associated with the MTFS forecasts:**

- Potential impact of the Provisional Finance Settlement (announcement in mid-December 2023) on 2024/25 and the medium term;
- Impact of potential changes to the New Home Bonus methodology and allocations from April 2025;
- Impact of the longer-term changes to the Business Rates Retention system from April 2025;
- Impact of pay awards higher or lower than currently allowed for in the MTFS (4% increase included for 2024/25 and 2% per annum from 2025/26 onwards);

- Impact of potential additional costs and income in 2025/26 from the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme for managing packaging waste;
  - Impact on income streams being greater than anticipated due to external factors such as Port Income;
  - Continuing impact of homelessness temporary accommodation costs in 2024/25 and the medium term and the impact on recovery of housing benefit subsidy;
  - Potential for additional support for the Leisure Management contactor in 2025/26 as a result of the energy costs crisis;
  - Impact of increases in Fees and Charges (where feasible) on the 2024/25 estimates and MTFS;
  - Impact of service developments eg. Car Parking Enforcement (CPE);
  - Revenue impact of funding new capital schemes not currently included in the capital programme;
  - Potential impact of the Council's future transformation programme with associated savings. Further detailed work is required to quantify the extent of these savings;
  - Potential positive impact over the MTFS of implementing the outcomes from the Accommodation Strategy;
  - Review of the recharge of staff time to the LATCO (Fenland Future Ltd) to quantify potential revenue savings. Currently recharges of £125k in 2024/25 onwards have been assumed in the MTFS;
  - Potential net benefits from FFL of loan interest and dividends from future developments over and above already included in the MTFS generating revenue income;
  - Commercial and Investment Strategy and future potential positive returns to the Council;
  - Review of the General Fund Balance and Earmarked Reserves to ensure they align with the future requirements of the Council.
- 7.12 Further details relating to several of the above issues should become clearer with the publication of the Provisional Finance Settlement expected to be announced in mid-December 2023.
- 7.13 Between now and the final budget report in February 2024 further analysis will be carried out on the impact of the issues detailed above, as and when further information becomes available. Consequently, the estimate for 2024/25 could change significantly from that detailed at Appendix A.
- 7.14 **Whatever impact the above issues may have however, there will remain a significant structural deficit for the Council to address over the medium term.**
- 7.15 The forecasts for the years 2025/26 – 2028/29 are provisional at this stage and should be considered with extreme caution. The Provisional Finance Settlement announcements regarding local government funding are imminent and therefore, the figures could be different to those included in the forecast. Future announcements and consultation outcomes will also determine government policy and therefore the funding in the future years. In addition, the forecasts are

dependent on permanently maintaining the savings identified through the My Fenland transformation initiative and the current TA2 programme.

- 7.16 As detailed earlier in this report, Business Rates Retention Reform, Fair Funding Review and changes to the New Homes Bonus could have a significant impact on the Council’s forecast resources over term of the MTFS. Further to the risks associated with these externally determined funding streams the Council should also ensure that income budgets are achieved and new income streams considered and implemented for medium to long term sustainability in combination with any operational and transformational benefits that the Council realises. The use of general reserves to support revenue expenditure adds to the overall risks to the Council as such reserves can only be used once but the cumulative impact of such use will continue to be felt into the future.

### **Other Risks**

#### **Capital Programme – Future Funding**

- 7.17 The Council is increasingly relying on borrowing (Internal and Prudential) to fund its future programme as the amount of capital receipts and the level of reserves available to fund the capital programme are reducing considerably over the next two years. Consequently, any new capital schemes (which do not generate a return to repay borrowing costs) will have to be funded through borrowing which will result in revenue costs and therefore will impact on the MTFS and future shortfalls.
- 7.18 For example, a £1m scheme with a 20 year life, funded by prudential borrowing, would result in around an additional £100,000 per annum in interest (5%) and repayment costs.
- 7.19 Consequently, a review of the current capital programme together with potential new schemes (as detailed in Section 11) and the ongoing revenue cost impact will need to be undertaken prior to the final budget report in February 2024, to ensure the final approved programme is sustainable within the context of the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 7.20 To exemplify the effect on the MTFS of potential additional costs arising from the above risks, Table 3 below details a scenario whereby the Council loses 50% of its business rates growth income following the reforms in 2025/26.

**Table 3: MTFS Potential Impact of Major Risks – for illustrative purposes only**

	Estimate	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>MTFS Shortfall - Appendix B</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>2,033</b>	<b>2,094</b>	<b>2,248</b>	<b>2,558</b>
<i>(Council Tax income level constant from 24/25 onwards)</i>					
50% loss of NNDR growth income		700	700	700	700
Increasing NHB threshold by 0.1%		100	150	200	250
Additional £1m per year borrowing	25	125	225	325	425
<b>Revised Shortfall</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>2,958</b>	<b>3,169</b>	<b>3,473</b>	<b>3,933</b>

- 7.21 As stated earlier, it is important to note that the figures detailed in the above table are purely illustrative as no decisions have yet been made regarding changes to

these funding streams or new capital schemes and the potential impact on this Council.

## **8 FEES AND CHARGES**

- 8.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel will consider all fees and charges for 2024/25 at its meeting on 15 January 2024 and recommend the Schedule of Fees and Charges to Cabinet at its meeting on 22 January 2024.
- 8.2 For the purposes of this report, no increase in fees over and above what has already been agreed (eg. Planning Fees and Garden Waste Subscriptions) has been included in the estimates for 2024/25 and the medium term. Income forecasts within the figures in this report are based on current fees and projected activity levels.
- 8.3 Members will be aware that several of our fees and charges are set by government and we have no discretion to amend these. The number of fees and charges which we have discretion to amend and the extent to which any increases significantly impact the Medium Term Forecasts detailed in this report are limited.

## **9 COUNCIL TAX – 2024/25**

- 9.1 The government has set the referendum limit for 2024/25 at 3% or £5, whichever is higher for District Councils (the same as 2023/24). A 3% increase on the Band D Council Tax equates to £7.65 per annum.
- 9.2 Social care authorities, such as Cambridgeshire County Council can also increase their element of council tax by a further 2% (5% in total which would equate to £77.14 on the County Council's Band D Council Tax if increase taken in full).
- 9.3 Council at its meeting on 17 July 2023, agreed to re-position the MTFS by keeping the cash level of Council Tax raised at the current level rather than the previously adopted 0% increase, while recognising that the Council continues to face significant financial challenges and uncertainties that may not allow this ambition to be met.
- 9.4 Members of the Council need to act responsibly each year when setting the precept to balance the ambition of keeping Council Tax income at its' current level with the legal need to balance the budget. It was agreed that raising Council Tax in any of the next four years will be a last resort in order to minimise the financial effects of Council Tax on all of Fenland's households.
- 9.5 For information, an additional 1% increase in Council Tax in 2024/25 would generate in the region of £81,000 of revenue per annum to the Council. Even with this additional revenue included, the estimates for future years show a significant shortfall (see Table 4 below).

### **Council Taxbase**

- 9.6 The amount of Council Tax income recognised in the estimates is determined by the Council Taxbase (Band D equivalents) and the level of Band D Council Tax. For 2024/25, the Council Taxbase has been calculated using the number of dwellings (as notified by the Valuation Office Agency), the impact of exemptions and discounts (eg. Single Person discount) and the amount of Council Tax Support awarded as reported in the Council Tax Base return submitted to DLUHC in October 2023.

- 9.7 In addition, an allowance for growth and for non-collection is included together to produce the estimated taxbase. For 2024/25, the draft taxbase has been calculated as 31,463 (Band D equivalents), an increase of 404 (1.3%) on 2023/24.
- 9.8 The number of dwellings included on the VOA valuation list will be kept under review together with further analysis of growth within the district to ensure the final taxbase calculation reflects the latest position.
- 9.9 In line with the motion agreed by Council on 17 July 2023, assumed Council Tax income has remained at its' current level for 2024/25 and over the period of the MTFs.
- 9.10 At this level of Council Tax, there will be a significant deficit to fund over the period of the MTFs. Consequently, the Council will need to continually consider its strategy to meet the estimated shortfalls shown at Table 2 and in Appendix B.
- 9.11 The implications of not increasing Council Tax over the MTFs is that the Council will be reducing its financial base permanently as it would not be able to recover potential revenue foregone due to the cumulative year on year impact. The consequences of setting Council Tax at its' current level and not achieving the necessary savings/additional income have been clearly demonstrated by the events at other Councils. The ability to achieve significant year on year savings (without increasing existing and/or introducing new revenue streams together with transformational change) to balance the budget becomes progressively difficult without eventually impacting on front-line services and delivery.
- 9.12 Council can of course agree to an increase up to the referendum limit of 3% and a 1% increase in Council Tax raises around £81,000 revenue per annum. Table 4 shows the implications of increasing the Council Tax in 2024/25 by 3% per annum and thereafter compared to keeping the Council Tax income constant and compared to freezing the Council Tax in 2024/25 and throughout the MTFs period.

**Table 4: MTFs Deficits at Differing Council Tax levels in 2024/25 onwards**

Deficits based on different levels of Council Tax	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000
<b>Deficits at CT at current level (as shown in Table 2/Appendix B)</b>	<b>+539</b>	<b>+2,033</b>	<b>+2,094</b>	<b>+2,248</b>	<b>+2,558</b>
Additional CT with 0% increase p.a. from 2024/25	-103	-199	-295	-390	-486
<b>Deficits at 0% increase</b>	<b>+436</b>	<b>+1,834</b>	<b>+1,799</b>	<b>+1,858</b>	<b>+2,072</b>
Additional CT with 3% increase p.a. from 2024/25	-344	-692	-1,054	-1,429	-1,818
<b>Deficits at 3% increase</b>	<b>+195</b>	<b>+1,341</b>	<b>+1,040</b>	<b>+819</b>	<b>+740</b>

## 10 REVIEW OF GENERAL FUND BALANCE AND EARMARKED RESERVES

- 10.1 An important part of any budget strategy is the review and consideration of reserves. Earmarked Reserves are typically held and used in a planned way to deal with issues where it is foreseen that resources need to be set aside to meet a specific need but the exact amount and timing is not known. General Reserves are held to cushion the impact of an event or events that cannot be foreseen whilst maintaining these resources at a consistent and reasonable level over the medium term.

- 10.2 Sufficient levels of reserves are necessary to provide for various contingent and unplanned items that could include:-
- significant increased costs of providing statutory services
  - significant increased contractual costs
  - an unexpected and/or significant event or disaster, e.g. civil emergency
  - an unexpected major liability in law
  - the need to make significant payments in relation to prior year adjustments under the direction of the external auditor
- 10.3 The Council's current uncommitted General Fund Balance is £2m. It is good practice to keep the balance on this reserve under review alongside ensuring that the purposes for which other earmarked reserves were allocated remain consistent with and relevant to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 10.4 Consequently, a review of the level of the General Fund Balance and the number and purpose of the earmarked reserves will be undertaken and any amendments will be presented to Cabinet and Council in the final budget report in February 2024.
- 10.5 The Budget Equalisation Reserve was established in 2019/20 to provide a smoothing mechanism between financial years which could provide resources to help achieve balanced budgets in future years whilst maintaining a 0% Council tax increase each year. The current balance on this reserve is £1.866m and is available to meet potential budget shortfalls for 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- 10.6 In previous reports, the Leader has stated that one of the main purposes of the Budget Equalisation Reserve was to facilitate a form of feedback loop to counter what he described as the Council's systemic outturn surpluses. Table 5 below, demonstrates the point that the Leader was making. It is, ultimately, a matter of political interpretation whether the pattern of repeated outturn surpluses is evidence of taxing residents more than we need to each year, or if it bears a different interpretation. That is entirely a political matter for Cabinet and Full Council to consider.
- 10.7 At a time of much personal financial pressure for households across Fenland, the Leader proposed, and Full Council approved at their budget meeting in February 2023, a one-off 2% reduction in Council tax in 2023/24. Subsequently, Council at its meeting on 17 July 2023, agreed to re-position the MTFS by keeping the cash level of Council Tax raised at the current level rather than the previously adopted 0% increase, while recognising that the Council continues to face significant financial challenges and uncertainties that may not allow this ambition to be met. The decisions by Council in February and July 2023 was considered a more effective and appropriate way to eliminate the Council's pattern of outturn surpluses, and that the fact that the Budget Equalisation Reserve now stands at £1.866m (before any potential use to fund any shortfall in 2023/24) provides the facility to smooth any short term revenue account budget pressures in any year(s) over the term of the MTFS. In that way the Leader proposed that the Council will be able to rebalance its Council Tax take from residents against its spending requirements. That though is a political judgment, and it is quite appropriate for Cabinet and Full Council either to accept that judgment or to reach a different political conclusion.

**Table 7: Net Deficit/Surplus(-) transferred from/(to) Reserves/Budget Equalisation Reserve**

	Budget £'000	Outturn £'000		Outturn Transferred to Reserves		
				Capital Reserve	Management of Change	Budget Equalisation
2023/24	0	707 (estimate)				-707
2022/23	203	-800				800
2021/22	842	-584				584
2020/21	0	-167				167
2019/20	151	-115				115
2018/19	73	-200				200
2017/18	0	-935		600	335	

- 10.8 The analysis of reserves at Appendix E details the projected General Fund and earmarked reserves position as at 31 March 2024 and 31 March 2025 before any use of these reserves to fund the potential shortfalls detailed at Appendix A. The final budget report to be considered by Cabinet and Council on 26 February 2024 will consider the use of these reserves.

## 11 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 11.1 Capital Expenditure and Income plans have been prepared through the Council's service and financial planning cycle. The Council's capital resources are dependent on government funding, external grants or through the ongoing disposal of assets.
- 11.2 Since February 2023, Members have continued to receive regular updates on several high-profile schemes including Wisbech High Street and the Future High Street Fund, March.
- 11.3 An updated Capital Programme for 2023-27 is presented at Appendix D(i) for approval. The programme has been updated to ensure it adequately reflects the cost and anticipated timing of schemes previously approved. **At this stage, no further capital schemes over and above those already approved have been included in the updated programme and the financing costs included in the MTFs.**
- 11.4 No allowance has yet been made for any potential new schemes detailed in Appendix D(ii). These schemes will be subject to further review by officers and members prior to determining the final budget proposals in February 2024.
- 11.5 In addition, no allowance has yet been made for the following developments which will significantly impact the Council's capital programme.

### Accommodation Strategy

Currently members and officers are working closely with the Council's professional advisors to produce an Accommodation Strategy. The decisions taken will inform the level of work required at Fenland Hall and The Base over the life of the capital programme. When decisions are taken regarding members' preferred option/s the capital programme will be adjusted accordingly. On this basis no commitments relating to Fenland Hall and the Base have been included in the current programme.



## Structural Works – Wisbech Port

- 11.6 Major structural concrete repair works commenced in the current financial year to address the deteriorating condition of the suspended quay at Wisbech Port. Extensive further work will be required over the next few years to ensure the quay at the port of Wisbech remains safe and operational. Full details of this work was presented to Cabinet at their meeting on 16 March 2023. A detailed option appraisal regarding the future of Wisbech Port will be required before any further investment in the quay is considered. Ultimately, the long-term replacement of the suspended quay could cost in the region of £50m. Further reports will be brought to Cabinet for consideration of the future of Wisbech Port.
- 11.7 Should resources from external funding and/or capital receipts not generate the level of receipts forecast, or there is a delay in disposal of assets, then the capital programme will need re-visiting to ensure funding is sufficient to meet proposed expenditure including through borrowing. Reviews of the programme and resources available are carried out regularly during the year.
- 11.8 The Council's Borrowing Strategy which is incorporated into the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement, recognises that prudential borrowing will be required over the life of the capital programme. Details of the estimated borrowing required is detailed at Appendix D. The projected annual revenue costs for the Council of the current approved programme are reflected in the medium term forecasts at Appendix B.
- 11.9 As stated earlier, a review of the current and future capital programme and its ongoing revenue cost impact will be undertaken to ensure the programme is sustainable within the context of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

## **12 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 12.1 There is an element of risk inherent in any process that looks into the future to make forecasts, particularly in the current economic climate and other national and international events now or in the future that may impact on the Council either directly or indirectly. The Council has a strong track record in good financial management as recognised in the recent Annual Audit Letter. This risk is further minimised by adopting the following methodology when preparing the estimates:-
- Service managers and the Accountancy Team working together to define likely service income/expenditure patterns matched with service delivery plans;
  - Maintaining "earmarked" reserves for expenditure that it is known will occur but the exact amount and timing of the expenditure is not known;
  - Maintaining an adequate level of general reserves to meet sudden and or unforeseen expenditure;
  - Adopting clear guidelines and control systems (robust revenue and capital budget management and monitoring procedures, Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules etc.) to alert service managers, and members before variances reach tolerance levels;
  - Using professional and expert advice and economic forecasts where these are available, e.g. treasury management, interest rates;
  - Maintaining a rolling review of forecast estimates beyond the current year.
- 12.2 These assumptions are made with all available information but are necessarily calculated based on broad assumptions. In the current economic climate, some of

these assumptions are particularly volatile. The MTFs will be prepared annually on a rolling basis so that as information becomes more certain the figures will be updated and early consideration can be given to any action or changes in direction that may be required.

### **13 CORPORATE DIRECTOR AND CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER (S151 Officer) STATEMENT**

- 13.1 The proposed budget is set against the context of significant economic uncertainty in a post-Covid-19 world, the current cost of living crisis, together with considerable uncertainty regarding government funding over the MTFs. The Government intends to make fundamental changes to the funding system for Local Government through the introduction of a new needs based fairer funding formula and the introduction of business rates reforms and a new system of distributing the New Homes Bonus. The cumulative impact of these changes and lack of visibility on any transition or damping arrangements means that financial planning for 2025/26 and the medium term is very uncertain.
- 13.2 Although there are still many uncertainties around the estimates for 2024/25 and over the medium term to 2028/29 detailed in this report, there are undoubtedly significant challenges facing the Council over the next few years. The report also highlights several major areas of risk which could also adversely affect the estimates over the MTFs. Of particular concern is the additional revenue impact of any new capital schemes which may be included in the final budget in February 2024.
- 13.3 As detailed in the report, Council Tax over each year of the MTFs has been included at its' current level in accordance with the decision by Council at its' meeting on 17 July 2023. At this level, there are currently estimated shortfalls of £539k in 2024/25, rising to £2.558m in 2028/29.
- 13.4 It is therefore, imperative that the Council has a robust savings strategy in place to meet these challenges. As detailed in the report, significant savings are expected from the Transformation Agenda 2 (TA2) programme and the outcome of the Accommodation Review.
- 13.5 Consequently, the delivery of the planned savings and major business projects **is critical** to the successful delivery of the Council's budget strategy. Without these savings being delivered, the current Council Tax strategy of keeping the level at the same cash amount as this year (or even a 0% increase per annum), will be unsustainable and future increases in Council Tax inevitable to deliver a balanced budget. Table 4 in Section 9 of this report exemplifies the impact of increasing Council Tax by up to 3% (the current referendum limit) on the shortfalls over the MTFs detailed in Appendix B.
- 13.6 Given the uncertainties detailed in this report, it is imperative that the Council maintains sufficient resources to cover any in-year unforeseen expenditure. A risk based approach to the consideration of the level of reserves is a component of the Council's overall risk management framework. Operational risks should be managed within Services' bottom line budgets and thus will not normally result in any further call on the Council's General Balances, as detailed in Section 10 above.

## FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Summary of Revenue Estimates

	Original Estimate 2023/24	Projected Outturn 2023/24	Estimate 2024/25
	£	£	£
<b>Service Summary</b>			
Growth & Infrastructure	1,149,154	1,447,945	1,579,700
Communities, Environment, Leisure & Planning	5,044,350	4,379,122	5,324,038
Resources & Customer Services	9,707,920	9,888,740	10,167,830
Pay Award 2023/24	0	691,000	0
Vacancy Factor (1.5%)	-199,000	0	-228,000
Transformation Programme - TA2 savings	0	0	-270,000
<b>NET COST OF GENERAL FUND SERVICES</b>	<b>15,702,424</b>	<b>16,406,807</b>	<b>16,573,568</b>
<b>Corporate Items</b>			
Internal Drainage Board Levies	1,877,510	1,903,750	1,999,010
Internal Drainage Board Levies Grant	0	-177,280	0
Contributions to/ (from) Earmarked Reserves	-740,187	-134,286	-628,104
Contributions to/(from) Business Rates Reserve	-211,048	-211,048	0
RTB Sharing Income	-20,000	-20,000	-20,000
Financing Charges - <i>Interest on External Borrowings</i>	618,990	618,990	1,023,325
Financing Charges - <i>MRP current Capital Programme</i>	396,900	396,900	587,700
Investment Income and Property Funds Income	-775,000	-1,220,000	-900,000
New Homes Bonus	-369,245	-369,245	-440,000
Services Grant	-149,720	-149,720	-149,720
Core Spending Power 3% Guarantee Grant	-600,957	-600,957	-600,957
<b>Corporate Items</b>	<b>27,243</b>	<b>37,104</b>	<b>871,254</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>15,729,667</b>	<b>16,443,911</b>	<b>17,444,822</b>
Contribution to/from(-) Budget Equalisation Reserve	<b>3,695</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>NET EXPENDITURE after use of balances</b>	<b>15,733,362</b>	<b>16,443,911</b>	<b>17,444,822</b>
<b>Core Funding</b>			
Revenue Support Grant	<b>-173,414</b>	<b>-173,414</b>	<b>-173,414</b>
<b>Business Rates - Income due in Year</b>			
Business Rates Funding	-10,557,996	-10,557,996	-10,790,823
Tariff Payment to Government	7,367,123	7,367,123	7,367,123
Renewable Energy Rates Retained	-1,904,210	-2,076,700	-1,416,450
Business Rates Pool - FDC Share of Benefit	-350,000	-450,000	-350,000
Business Rates S31 Grants due in year	-2,911,969	-2,897,620	-3,254,130
Business Rates Levy due in year	600,615	854,970	666,530
	<b>-7,756,437</b>	<b>-7,760,223</b>	<b>-7,777,750</b>
<b>Business Rates Collection Fund Deficit(+)/Surplus(-)</b>	<b>211,048</b>	<b>211,048</b>	<b>-969,459</b>
<b>Council Tax Collection Fund Deficit(+)/Surplus(-)</b>	<b>-87,064</b>	<b>-87,064</b>	<b>-57,613</b>
<b>Council Tax</b>	<b>-7,927,495</b>	<b>-7,927,495</b>	<b>-7,927,495</b>
<b>Business Rates and Council Tax Funding</b>	<b>-15,733,362</b>	<b>-15,737,148</b>	<b>-16,905,731</b>
<b>Surplus(-)/Shortfall(+)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>706,763</b>	<b>539,091</b>

**APPENDIX B**  
(Council Tax income level constant  
2024/25 onwards)

<b>Medium Term Financial Strategy</b>	Projected 2023/24 £000	Estimate 2024/25 £000	Forecast 2025/26 £000	Forecast 2026/27 £000	Forecast 2027/28 £000	Forecast 2028/29 £000
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>						
<b>Service Expenditure/Income</b>						
Gross Service Expenditure	29,428	29,239	28,754	29,035	29,474	29,924
Gross Service Income	-13,022	-12,167	-11,623	-11,778	-12,038	-12,303
Vacancy Factor (1.5%)	0	-228	-234	-236	-242	-248
Transformation Programme - additional savings	0	-270	-306	-339	-372	-372
<b>Total Net Service Expenditure</b>	<b>16,406</b>	<b>16,574</b>	<b>16,591</b>	<b>16,682</b>	<b>16,822</b>	<b>17,001</b>
<b>Corporate Items</b>						
<b>Corporate Expenditure/Savings</b>						
Internal Drainage Board Levies	1,904	1,999	2,059	2,121	2,184	2,250
Internal Drainage Board Levies Grant	-177					
Financing Charges - Interest on External Borrowing	619	1,023	1,216	1,320	1,527	1,427
Financing Charges - MRP Current Capital Programme	397	588	730	795	809	850
	<b>2,743</b>	<b>3,610</b>	<b>4,005</b>	<b>4,236</b>	<b>4,520</b>	<b>4,527</b>
<b>Corporate Income Items</b>						
Contribution to(+)/from(-) Earmarked Reserves	-134	-628	-88	-88	-88	-88
Contribution to(+)/from(-) Business Rates Reserve	-211	0	0	0	0	0
RTB/VAT Sharing Income	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20
Investment and Property Fund Income	-1,220	-900	-1,050	-1,250	-1,450	-1,250
New Homes Bonus	-369	-440	-440	-440	-440	-440
CSP Guarantee Grant	-601	-601	-601	-601	-601	-601
Services Grant	-150	-150	-150	-150	-150	-150
Contribution to Budget Equalisation Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>-2,705</b>	<b>-2,739</b>	<b>-2,349</b>	<b>-2,549</b>	<b>-2,749</b>	<b>-2,549</b>
<b>Total Corporate Items</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>871</b>	<b>1,656</b>	<b>1,687</b>	<b>1,771</b>	<b>1,978</b>
<b>Gross Service/Corporate Expenditure</b>	<b>32,171</b>	<b>32,351</b>	<b>32,219</b>	<b>32,696</b>	<b>33,380</b>	<b>33,831</b>
<b>Gross Service/Corporate Income</b>	<b>-15,727</b>	<b>-14,906</b>	<b>-13,972</b>	<b>-14,327</b>	<b>-14,787</b>	<b>-14,852</b>
<b>Net Budget Requirement</b>	<b>16,444</b>	<b>17,445</b>	<b>18,247</b>	<b>18,369</b>	<b>18,593</b>	<b>18,979</b>
<b><u>Funding - RSG, Business Rates &amp; Council Tax</u></b>						
<b>Revenue Support Grant</b>	<b>-173</b>	<b>-173</b>	<b>-173</b>	<b>-173</b>	<b>-173</b>	<b>-173</b>
<b>Business Rates</b>						
Business Rates Baseline Funding	-10,558	-10,791	-11,705	-11,831	-11,958	-12,085
Tariff Payment to Government	7,367	7,367	7,588	7,664	7,741	7,818
Renewable Energy Rates Retained	-2,077	-1,416	-1,505	-1,498	-1,499	-1,506
Business Rates Pool - FDC Share of Benefit	-450	-350	-350	-350	-350	-350
Business Rates S31 Grants due in year	-2,898	-3,254	-2,790	-2,819	-2,849	-2,879
Business Rates Levy due in year	855	667	698	709	720	731
Business Rates Collection Fund Deficit	211	-970	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Business Rates Funding</b>	<b>-7,550</b>	<b>-8,747</b>	<b>-8,064</b>	<b>-8,125</b>	<b>-8,195</b>	<b>-8,271</b>
<b>Council Tax</b>						
Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus(-)/Deficit	-87	-58	-50	-50	-50	-50
Council Tax (Constant level 2024/25 onwards)	-7,927	-7,927	-7,927	-7,927	-7,927	-7,927
<b>Total Council Tax Funding</b>	<b>-8,014</b>	<b>-7,985</b>	<b>-7,977</b>	<b>-7,977</b>	<b>-7,977</b>	<b>-7,977</b>
<b>Total Funding - RSG/Business Rates/Council Tax</b>	<b>-15,737</b>	<b>-16,906</b>	<b>-16,214</b>	<b>-16,275</b>	<b>-16,345</b>	<b>-16,421</b>
<b>Surplus(-)/Shortfall(+)</b>	<b>+707</b>	<b>+539</b>	<b>+2,033</b>	<b>+2,094</b>	<b>+2,248</b>	<b>+2,558</b>

## Assumptions built into Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

Within the forecasts are a number of assumptions which are necessary to produce the overall budget strategy. However, there is an element of risk associated with this process although the aim is to mitigate these risks as detailed in section 12 of the main report.

The main assumptions are as follows:

- Council Tax income remains at current levels for 2024/25 and over the period of the MTFS. With the estimated increases in the Council Tax base, this equates to a reduction in Council Tax levels of £3.24 or 1.27% for 2024/25 with further reductions in the following years. The cumulative reduction in Council Tax by 2028/29 would be around £14.76 or 5.78%. (For comparison, a 0% increase would generate £103k of resources and a 3% increase around £344k of resources).
- 1.30% increase in Council Tax base in 2024/2025 (Tax-base 31,463) and 1.20% thereafter (increase of 375 Band D equivalent properties per annum).
- Inflation increases in Retained Business Rates income from 2025/26 onwards. Future net benefits from Business Rates will be dependent upon the impact of any potential system re-set and other changes from April 2025 onwards.
- Inclusion of this Council's share (£350k) of the potential benefit arising from the continuation of the Cambridgeshire Business Rates Pool in 2024/25 onwards. Although Fenland will not formally be part of the Pool for 2024/25, the Pool members have agreed for Fenland to be no worse off as a result of the new Pool arrangements. Potential benefit from the Pool in future years will be dependent on any changes to the Business Rates Retention System from April 2025.
- Continuation of the Services Grant (£150k allocated in 2023/24) and the Core Spending Guarantee Grant (£601k allocated in 2023/24) in 2024/25. Although the national totals of these grants will remain in the Local Government sector in future years, they may be allocated differently.
- The New Homes Bonus (£368k allocated in 2023/24) has been included at £440k per annum from 2024/25 onwards as detailed in Section 4 of the report. Future allocations will be dependent upon the scheme design and national totals of any replacement Housing Growth initiative.
- 4% pay award in 2024/25 (£608k cost) and 2% thereafter together with an allowance for pay increments of around 0.5% p.a. (£76k cost).
- Employer's Pension Contributions – following the triennial valuation as at 31.03.2022, the contribution rate for 2023/24 – 2025/26 increased slightly to 17.6% of salary (17.4% in 2022/23) with an additional past deficit lump sum payment of £922k for 2023/24, £884k for 2024/25 and £845k for 2025/26 representing an overall increase of 1% p.a. in total contributions.
- Inclusion of a vacancy factor for 2024/25 onwards, equivalent to a reduction in staff costs of 1.5% (£228k in 2024/25).
- Specific allowance for inflation where required eg: employee costs (as detailed above), business rates, external contracts, energy and water, fuel costs, drainage board levies etc. Otherwise, no allowance for inflation has been included.

- Investment interest rates are forecast to remain at current levels until Q2, 2024 before subsequently decreasing back to 3% in Q4, 2025 (£550k estimated income from temporary investments in 2024/25).
- Investment income includes the £4m investment in property funds in March 2022 (£130k p.a. income net of costs in 2024/25).
- Apart from the known increases to Planning Fees and Garden Waste Subscriptions, assumptions regarding forecast income levels from increases in fees and charges have not yet been included in 2024/25 and the medium term. There are only a limited number of these which we have discretion over setting. These will be reviewed by Overview & Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet in January 2024 for inclusion in the final budget report in February 2024. Income levels are currently included in the forecasts at current levels taking into account projected activity levels.
- For 2024/25 onwards, a full years' worth of Management Fee being received from the Leisure Management contractor has been assumed. This follows two years of significant additional Council support for the Leisure Management contract in 2020/21 and 2021/22 as a result of Covid-19, through deferral of the management fee and also cash support. Further support was agreed in 2022/23 and 2023/24 to mitigate the significant impact of rising energy costs. No allowance has been made at this stage for any potential additional support for 2024/25.
- For 2024/25 onwards, provision has been included for a reduction in costs/increase housing benefit subsidy of £370k relating to bed and breakfast and temporary accommodation for the homelessness and rough sleeper's service. This is a result of various initiatives currently progressing, in conjunction with current providers and from the impact of the additional houses purchased with support from the Local Authority Housing Fund.
- Recharges to Fenland Future Limited to reflect the use of FDC officer time on the company's behalf has been included (£125k in 2022/23 and future years). This amount could vary depending on the amount of time and types of activities being carried out for the company.
- Potential net benefits from Fenland Future Ltd of loan interest and dividends from future developments have been included. These amounts could vary depending on the timing and profitability of developments being carried out by the company.
- No potential additional income (or costs) from the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme for managing packaging waste (effective from 2025/26) has been included as there are currently no indications of the level of this income.
- £270k of in-year savings have been included in 2024/25 for potential savings from the Transformation Agenda 2 programme, rising each year to £372k savings included in 2028/29.
- Estimated financing costs (Interest and MRP) of the current capital programme as detailed in Appendix D(i) are included in the MTFs. No allowance has been made for any additional new capital schemes which may be included in the final budget in February 2024.

## CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND FUNDING 2023 - 2027

	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000
<b>CURRENT FORECAST EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>23,853</b>	<b>7,650</b>	<b>9,059</b>	<b>9,766</b>
<b>FORECAST RESOURCES AVAILABLE</b>				
Capital Grants	13,541	1,754	1,194	1,194
Usable Capital Receipts - In Year	155	250	250	250
Reserves used in year to fund Capital	399	0	0	0
Section 106s and Other Contributions	25	0	0	0
Borrowing (Internal and Prudential) - Capital Programme	4,728	3,646	1,615	350
Borrowing (Prudential) - CIS	5,005	2,000	6,000	7,972
<b>TOTAL FORECAST RESOURCES</b>	<b>23,853</b>	<b>7,650</b>	<b>9,059</b>	<b>9,766</b>

CAPITAL PROGRAMME SUMMARY 2023/24 - 2026/27										APPENDIX D(i)
		2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total Cost £000	FDC Funding £000	External Funding £000	External Funders and FDC Reserves/S106	
<b>Leisure Centres</b>										
1	Condition Survey Improvements	208	1,055	1,055		2,318	2,265	53	£53k DLUHC 'Changing Places' Grant	
2	Energy Efficiency Works - Solar PV; Manor CHP; Manor Pool AHU	635				635	275	360	£110k CPCA Growing Fenland; £250k Sport England	
3	Manor Basketball/Tennis/Netball Improvements including site investment appraisal	80				80	0	80	£55k CPCA Growing Fenland; £25k FCC Communities Grant	
4	Leisure Centres - Facility Strategy	100	25	25	0	150	150	0		
<b>Regeneration Programmes</b>										
5	Heritage Lottery Fund - Non-FDC Properties	98				98	0	98	HLF Grant.	
6	Heritage Lottery Fund - 24 High Street, Wisbech	1,000	1,989			2,989	2,531	458	£220k CPCA Grant; £238k HLF	
7	Railway Station Master-Planning - Manea Station Car Park	10				10	10	0		
8	Future High Street Fund, March	6,716				6,716	197	6,519	£2,000k CPCA, £4,519k DLUHC Future High Streets,	
9	Growing Fenland - Capital Grants	33				33	0	33	£33k CPCA Grant	
10	Whittlesey Market Place Improvements	20				20	0	20	£20k CPCA Growing Fenland Grant	
11	Whittlesey Southern Relief Road - SOBC	265				265	0	265	£265k CPCA Growing Fenland Grant	
<b>Parks and Open Spaces</b>										
12	Wisbech Park Pavillion	950				950	449	501	£240K Cambs CC Capital Communities Fund Grant, £299K CPCA Grant, £60K DLUHC Changing Places Grant	
13	Wisbech Park - Play Area Refurbishment	135				135	88	47	£47k DLUHC Levelling Up Parks Fund, £25k S106	
14	National Trust Peckover House	40	0	0	0	40	40	0	£40K DLUHC Changing Places Grant	
<b>Cemeteries</b>										
15	Cemetery Chapels Condition Survey Works	237				237	237	0		
16	Remedial Works in Closed Cemeteries	50	150	150		350	350	0		
<b>Highways</b>										
17	Category 2 Street Lights - FDC Lights	54	110			164	164	0		
18	Street Light Improvements - Parishes (Contribution to Cat 2 Replacements)	2				2	2	0	£2k Capital Contribution Reserve	
19	Growing Fenland - Civil Parking Enforcement	5	322			327	0	327	£327k CPCA Grant	
20	Huntingdon Road Improvements, Chatteris	120				120	120	0		
<b>Environment</b>										
21	Replacement and Additional Litter Bins	27				27	27	0		
22	Sound Monitoring Equipment	30				30	30	0	£30k Capital Contribution Reserve	
<b>Port</b>										
23	Wisbech Suspended Quay - Structural Concrete Repairs	1,300				1,300	1,300	0		
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>12,115</b>	<b>3,651</b>	<b>1,230</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16,996</b>	<b>8,235</b>	<b>8,761</b>		



		2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total Cost £000	FDC Funding £000	External Funding £000	External Funders and FDC Reserves/S106
<b>Brought Forward</b>		12,115	3,651	1,230	0	16,996	8,235	8,761	
<b>Vehicles and Plant</b>									
24 Vehicles		233	200	200	200	833	833	0	
25 CCTV Cameras		26				26	0	26	£26k Safer Fenland Funding
<b>ICT System Replacement Programme &amp; Upgrades</b>									
26 Replacement & Upgrade Programme		200	100	100	100	500	500	0	£149k Management of Change Reserve
27 Transformation Projects		265				265	265	0	
<b>Improvement of Assets</b>									
28 Sewage Treatment Works Refurbishment		500	300	300	300	1,400	1,400	0	
29 March Moorings Renewals		20	25	25		70	70	0	
30 Lattersey Nature Reserve - Capping Layer			40	10		50	50	0	
31 Nene Waterfront Infrastructure Improvements		180				180	0	180	£180k Brownfield Land Release Fund
<b>Car Parks</b>									
32 Eastwood, Chatteris		10	140			150	150	0	
<b>Economic Estates</b>									
33 Longhill Industrial Estate - Roof - Urgent Works		205				205	205	0	£205k Repairs & Maintenance Reserve
<b>Libraries</b>									
34 Heritage Library Display - Whittlesey		10				10	0	10	£10k CPCA Growing Fenland Grant
<b>Private Sector Housing Support</b>									
35 Private Sector Renewal Grants		60	40	40	40	180	0	180	£180k Govt Grant
36 Disabled Facilities Grants/Loans		1,760	1,154	1,154	1,154	5,222	0	5,222	£5,222k Govt Grant
<b>UK Shared Prosperity Fund</b>									
37 Investment in Business Grants		150				150	0	150	£150 CPCA Grant
<b>Commercial and Investment Strategy Schemes</b>									
38 Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) 1		2,087				2,087	1,213	874	£874k LAHF 1
39 Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) 2		5,032				5,032	2,792	2,240	£2,240k LAHF 2
40 Loans to Fenland Future Ltd/Other Investment Opportunities		1,000	2,000	6,000	7,972	16,972	16,972	0	
<b>Total - Approved Programme</b>		<b>23,853</b>	<b>7,650</b>	<b>9,059</b>	<b>9,766</b>	<b>50,328</b>	<b>32,685</b>	<b>17,643</b>	
Capital Grants		13,541	1,754	1,194	1,194	17,683			
Usable Capital Receipts - In Year		155	250	250	250	905			
Reserves used in year to fund Capital		399	0	0	0	399			
Section 106s and Other Contributions		25	0	0	0	25			
Borrowing (Internal and Prudential)		9,733	5,646	7,615	8,322	31,316			
		<b>23,853</b>	<b>7,650</b>	<b>9,059</b>	<b>9,766</b>	<b>50,328</b>			

POTENTIAL NEW CAPITAL SCHEMES 2024/25 - 2026/27								APPENDIX D(ii)
	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total Cost £000	FDC Funding £000	External Funding £000	External Funders and FDC Reserves/S106	
<b>Leisure Centres</b>								
1 Manor Leisure Centre	500	2,000	0	2,500	2,500	0		
2 Hudson Leisure Centre	250	450	0	700	700	0		
3 George Campbell Leisure Centre	250	350	0	600	600	0		
4 Cardio Gym Kit Replacement	0	100	0	100	100	0		
5 Resistance Gym Kit Replacement	0	0	500	500	500	0		
<b>Parks and Open Spaces</b>								
6 Park Infrastructure (paths / gates etc)	200	150	0	350	350	0		
7 Play Park Re-furb Programme	205	200	0	405	405	0		
8 Tree Works	50	50	0	100	100	0		
<b>Cemeteries</b>								
9 Remedial Works in Open Cemeteries	140	100	0	240	240	0		
10 Flood Management Programme - Eastwood Cem, March	100	0	0	100	100	0		
<b>Highways</b>								
11 Algores Way, Wisbech - Road Resurfacing Works	300	0	0	300	300	0		
12 Europa Way, Wisbech - Road Resurfacing Works	275	0	0	275	275	0		
13 Brewin Chase, March - Road Resurfacing Works	250	0	0	250	250	0		
<b>Port</b>								
14 Small Twin Screw Tug, Wisbech Port	500	0	0	500	500	0		
<b>Vehicles and Plant</b>								
15 Vehicles (additional to current programme)	639	532	665	1,836	1,836	0		
16 Bring Banks							Budget and Funding to be decided	
<b>Improvement of Assets</b>								
17 West End Park Moorings, March	155	0	0	155	155	0		
18 Boat House							Budget and Funding to be decided	
19 Creek Hostel - Roof							Budget and Funding to be decided	
20 Accomodation Review							Budget and Funding to be decided	
<b>Car Parks</b>								
21 Chapel Road Car Park, Wisbech	750	0	0	750	750	0		
<b>Grant Match Funding</b>								
22 Potential Wisbech Levelling up Fund Bid; match funding required	350	1,650	0	2,000	2,000	0		
<b>Total - Potential New Schemes</b>	<b>4,914</b>	<b>5,582</b>	<b>1,165</b>	<b>11,661</b>	<b>11,661</b>	<b>0</b>		
Capital Grants	0	0	0	0				
Usable Capital Receipts - In Year	0	0	0	0				
Reserves used in year to fund Capital	0	0	0	0				
Section 106s and Other Contributions	0	0	0	0				
Borrowing (Internal and Prudential)	4,914	5,582	1,165	11,661				
	4,914	5,582	1,165	11,661				

Reserve Name	Balance 01.04.23 £	Capital Funding £	Revenue Contributions to(+)/from(-) 2023/24 £	Revised Balance 31.03.24 £	Capital Funding £	Revenue Contributions to(+)/from(-) 2024/25 £	Estimated Balance 31.03.25 £
Travellers Sites	447,968		27,780	475,748		47,710	523,458
CCTV - Plant & Equipment	41,128		10,000	51,128		10,000	61,128
Station Road, Whittlesey - Maintenance	10,400		2,800	13,200		2,800	16,000
Management of Change	447,782	-149,000	-79,830	218,952		-206,690	12,262
Business Rates Equalisation Reserve	1,050,993		-211,048	839,945			839,945
Capital Contribution Reserve	131,117	-32,000		99,117			99,117
Port - Buoy Maintenance	146,999		-1,200	145,799			145,799
Repairs and Maintenance	704,706	-245,000		459,706			459,706
Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) - Wisbech	51,682		-21,390	30,292		-21,390	8,902
Highways Street Lighting	65,910		19,230	85,140		19,230	104,370
Solid Wall Remediation	100,000			100,000			100,000
Investment Strategy Reserve	1,340,168			1,340,168			1,340,168
Budget Equalisation Reserve	1,866,568			1,866,568			1,866,568
Planning Reserve	325,418		-100,000	225,418		-166,680	58,738
Elections Reserve	194,742		-114,724	80,018		30,000	110,018
Port - Pilots Staff Development Training	24,000		-13,930	10,070			10,070
Cambridgeshire Horizons	2,515,244		-179,890	2,335,354		-122,230	2,213,124
Specific Government Grants (received in previous years)	1,659,859		316,868	1,976,727		-220,854	1,755,873
<b>TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES</b>	<b>11,124,681</b>	<b>-426,000</b>	<b>-345,334</b>	<b>10,353,347</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-628,104</b>	<b>9,725,243</b>
General Fund Balance	2,000,000			2,000,000			2,000,000
<b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>	<b>13,124,681</b>	<b>-426,000</b>	<b>-345,334</b>	<b>12,353,347</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-628,104</b>	<b>11,725,243</b>

*Comments / Conditions of Use*

Can only be used for specific future maintenance liabilities.

Available for future CCTV maintenance & replacement liabilities.

Required for future road maintenance.

Available for the effective management of any organisational changes required to meet the Council's future priorities.

Available to assist the Council in smoothing out volatility in the business rates retention system.

Available to fund specific spending commitments in future years.

Available for future buoy maintenance to service windfarms.

Available to provide funding for one-off schemes, not covered by the normal Repairs and Maintenance revenue budgets.

To manage the Heritage Lottery Funded scheme in Wisbech.

Available to fund future repairs and maintenance relating to street lighting.

Available to fund potential costs linked to solid wall installations in the District.

Established to provide future funding for Commercial and Investment Strategy projects.

Year-end surpluses are transferred to this reserve. If a deficit is forecast this reserve can be used to offset the expected shortfall.

Available to fund additional planning costs not reflected in the annual budget, including the development of the Local Plan.

Available to fund four-yearly District-wide elections. Transfers are made to this reserve each year to fund the cost of the next District-wide election.

Available to fund the training of maritime pilots to fulfill the authority's statutory functions.

Available for the Council's future use in accordance with the conditions attached to the receipt.

Available to fund specific spending commitments in future years.

Unallocated general reserve required for various and unplanned for contingencies, to mitigate risks associated with future financial planning as well as for general day to day cash flow needs.

NB: In accordance with the Council's Financial Rules and Scheme of Financial Delegation ( Part 4, Rule 6 of the Constitution), paragraphs B57 - B60 delegates authority to the Chief Finance Officer to approve expenditure from these reserves in accordance with their approved use as detailed above.

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# Agenda Item 7

<b>Agenda Item No:</b>	<b>7</b>	
<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>18 December 2023</b>	
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>Open Spaces - Play Areas Capital Investment Policy</b>	

## **1 Purpose / Summary**

- 1.1 This paper details a planned refurbishment programme for FDC's play areas and the FDC capital investment necessary in the short term.

## **2 Key Issues**

- 2.1 The Council recognises the importance of play areas for our local communities, for both health and community cohesion.
- 2.2 Fenland manages many open spaces throughout the district - around 135 hectares in total. This includes 6 open cemeteries, 50 play areas, 5 skate parks and 20 closed churchyards.
- 2.3 Play areas receive a two-weekly safety inspection from a qualified member of the grounds maintenance contractor and are also monitored by the Open Spaces Horticulture Officer.
- 2.4 In addition, the British and European safety standard BS EN1176 and the Health and Safety Executive strongly recommend that all play areas have at least one inspection every year from an independent suitably qualified body such as RoSPA. Childrens playgrounds should be inspected annually by an independent specialist to ensure the long-term safety of the site, equipment and ancillary items. This will also meet legal and insurance responsibilities as well as complying with the requirements of EN1176 (the European Playground Standard). FDC have in the past commissioned ROSPA to carry out this inspection but will also investigate other more cost-effective local providers.
- 2.5 Fenland carry out repairs to existing play equipment and ancillaries through the revenue budget. In the past year approximately £90,000 worth of repairs have been carried out, with significant costs on safety surfacing, more complicated parts required for equipment and parts due in response to the March 2023 ROSPA inspection.
- 2.6 With these significant costs and the number of play areas and pieces of play equipment under the Council's ownership, it is proposed that replacing equipment deemed beyond economic repair should be carried out only when S106 funds are available or if the local Parish / Town Council have agreed to fund necessary replacements if Section 106 funding are not available. If neither source of financial support are forthcoming the piece of play equipment will be removed and not replaced [the proposed policy approach].
- 2.7 A programme of play area improvement and replacement continues. Since 2019, the Council has facilitated a spend of £514,000 to date. These improvements have been funded by FDC capital support and Section 106 funding, as well as leveraging in supplementary third-party grants from bodies such as FCC Communities Foundation and the Amey Cespa Community Fund - both landfill tax credit supported schemes.
- 2.8 Following the extensive programs of improvements in the last decade covering all areas, the Council's future work will now focus on S106 and grant funded projects only, with the emphasis on enhancing the destination play areas such as West End Park in March, The Manor in Whittlesey, Wisbech Park, Furrowfields and Wenny Rec in Chatteris which prove the most popular with the local community where the s106 funding can be justifiably linked to the development [the proposed policy approach].

- 2.9 This paper details the play areas across Fenland and their current condition and then highlights details regarding which play areas will reach the end of their useful life in the coming five years and the subsequent necessary planned expenditure per site – this approach is only for sites where Section 106 funding for works are available. Where additional Section 106 funding becomes available, the programme may be expanded to cover other play areas that are at end of life [the proposed policy approach].
- 2.10 Play areas not owned or maintained by FDC will remain the responsibility of the owner whether that be a private individual, builder or housing association etc. The Council will not take on further liabilities in term of adopting site, nor carry out repairs on a third party owned open space [the proposed policy approach].
- 2.11 New areas installed by developers as a result of planning applications will remain the responsibly of the developer and will not be adopted by FDC. This has been the practice for the past few years [ the current policy approach].
- 2.12 Other than as listed in section 3.3 of the main Report, in making decisions on the schemes of proposed replacements of, improvements to, or consolidation of play areas within the four Town Council areas, the views of the District Councillors in each town shall be taken into account by Cabinet, such views to be obtained by convening virtual meetings of the relevant councillors within the next six months to consider any alternative utilisation within their town of the capital and revenue resources currently anticipated to be available for play areas in that town. Once these views are known, a further report shall be presented to Cabinet.

### **3 Recommendations**

- 3.1 That Cabinet approves the policy approach to future spending on play areas and play area adoptions as identified in this report in sections 2.2 – 2.9, subject to the provisions of section 2.12.
- 3.2 That Cabinet delegates to the S151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, responsibility to ensure funds that are made available to deliver the play area improvements detailed in section 3.3 of this report.
- 3.3 That Cabinet notes the changes proposed in Section 12 regarding St. Paul's Drive and Willy Terrace in Chatteris. Pinewood Avenue in Whittlesey and those in Malt Drive, Westhead Avenue and Burcroft Road in Wisbech, subject to the provisions of section 2.12.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	KEY/24AUG23/04

Portfolio Holders	Cllr Peter Murphy, Portfolio Holder for Environment  Cllr Chris Boden, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance
Report Originators	Kevin Wilkins, Contracts Manager <a href="mailto:kwilkins@fenland.gov.uk">kwilkins@fenland.gov.uk</a> Phil Hughes, Head of Service <a href="mailto:phughes@fenland.gov.uk">phughes@fenland.gov.uk</a> Carol Pilson, Corporate Director <a href="mailto:cpilson@fenland.gov.uk">cpilson@fenland.gov.uk</a>
Contact Officer	Carol Pilson, Corporate Director <a href="mailto:cpilson@fenland.gov.uk">cpilson@fenland.gov.uk</a>
Background Papers	

## Report:

### **1 Day to day management of Fenland's Play Areas**

- 1.0 The Council manages and maintains many play areas on our open spaces. Further information may be found on the council's website at:  
<https://www.fenland.gov.uk/playareas>
- 1.1 Each play area has an average of 5 pieces of equipment available - the Council is looking after hundreds of different pieces of equipment.
- 1.2 A two-weekly safety inspection is carried out at all play areas and skate parks, with any significant issues attended to promptly.
- 1.3 The Council uses the revenue budget to maintain the play areas safely and replace minor items. In the past 5 years, the Council has spent approximately £250,000 on play park maintenance from the revenue budget. This is a substantial increase of £100,000 on the previous 5 years due to increased spares and repairs costs and expensive safety surface repairs.

### **2 Improvement or Replacement of Play Areas**

Fenland saw a significant programme of key play area replacements take place 10 years ago. Whilst the replacement programme has slowed since then, significant investment continues, as highlighted by investment over the past 4 years in the following table.

#### 2.1 Open Spaces capital spend in the past 4 years:

	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Total</b>

Snowley Park, Whittlesey	£120,000				
Burdett Grove Whittlesey	£45,000				
Parson Drove		£30,000			
West End Park, March		£39,000			
Larham Way Chatteris		£30,000			
Huntingdon Rd Chatteris		£30,000			
Doddington Junior Play			£45,000		
Cricketers Way Chatteris			£40,000		
Wisbech Park				£135,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£165,000</b>	<b>£129,000</b>	<b>£85,000</b>	<b>£135,000</b>	<b>£514,000</b>

- 2.2 Improvement and replacement works are currently reliant on FDC capital funding and limited Section 106 contributions, often supplemented by third party grant applications. In the past Fenland has been successful with attracting matched funding from Amey Cespa Community Fund, WREN (now renamed FCC Communities Foundation) and Clarion Futures.

### 3 Current play area conditions survey

- 3.1 Fenland's play areas have been assessed, with a summary of each facility, approximate installation date and equipment condition detailed in Section 12.
- 3.2 The conditions survey work has informed the following matrix of planned play area replacement works over the coming 5 years.



### 3.3 Play Areas - proposed planned replacement and improvements work 2024/25 to 2028/29

Location	Park name	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28 tbc	2028/29 tbc	Section 106 Funding / other grant	FDC Capital requirement
March	The Avenue area improvements and additional equipment			£35,000			£35,000 S106	£0
Whittlesey	Manor, play area improvements	£45,000					£45,000 S106	£0
March	Robingoodfellows Multi Use Games Area & general improvements		£38,000				£38,000 S106	£0
<b>Total</b>		£45,000	£38,000	£35,000			£118,000	£0

## **4 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES**

- 4.1 To update Cabinet on the previous investment plan regarding play areas and highlight a needs-based investment programme for the following 5 years.

## **5 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 Needs based investment assessment of current play areas, highlighting required investment in the short term.

## **6 CONSULTATION**

Section 2.12 refers to future local elected Member consultation that will be conducted.

## **7 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 7.1 Consolidation of the end of life play area at St. Paul's Drive in Chatteris with the Furrowfields play area.
- 7.2 Retain the Council's current strategy of utilising the Council's capital/revenue budget to maintain and invest in new equipment however this represents a significant financial investment of the Council's resources at a time when the Council's finances are under significant strain.

## **8 IMPLICATIONS**

### **8.1 Legal Implications**

N/A

### **8.2 Financial Implications**

- 8.3 Capital expenditure necessary for replacing and refurbishing the play area is highlighted in the report.

### **8.4 Equality Implications**

- 8.5 When a play area is improved, equipment is considered carefully with equipment fitted that allows a disabled user the opportunity to play.

## **9 APPENDIX - Play Area conditions survey**

- 9.1 Fenland Council manages 50 play areas and 5 skate parks. Inspection of equipment at every site takes place every other week through the FDC contractor, currently Tivoli, and annually through ROSPA (most recently March 2023).

- 9.2 The sites are spread about the district amongst 4 towns (Wisbech and Chatteris have 9 play areas each, March 8 and Whittlesey 6) and 8 villages (Coates and Eastrea have 2 areas each, the others one).
- 9.3 There are other play areas in the district managed by Clarion, housing developers, Town and Parish Councils and these have not been included.
- 9.4 Size of the play areas varies, as does the nature of the equipment, but in total there are 380+ individual pieces of play equipment across the Fenland managed sites. This does not include bins, benches, fences or signage.
- 9.5 In general the equipment is in reasonable to good condition. Where items have been vandalised beyond repair or have become structurally unsafe, these have been removed. Where items can be repaired, this has taken place and Tivoli carries equipment which can remedy many minor eventualities without further intervention.
- 9.6 The 10 Areas that have been either fully replaced or refurbished since 2019 are equal to 20% of play area stock. This successful programme of works enabled FDC to remove the most dated areas and install new, destination style, play areas. One being at Snowley Park, Whittlesey and the most recent Wisbech Park.
- 9.7 The table and comments below list the existing stock, note the approximate installation date(s) and anticipated replacement dates that should be considered as part of the play area future investment programme. Any dates, historic or predicted, are indicative only. Whilst a piece of equipment or the entire stock of a park may be expected to last 15 - 20 or more years, heavy usage, vandalism, extreme weather or misuse will inevitably reduce the lifespan.
- 9.8 Benwick
- High Street. All equipment is in good condition. New site installed 2018. Replacement 20+ years
- 9.9 Chatteris
- Cricketers Way. Installed 2022. No works required.
  - Furrowfields Rec. Equipment is in good condition facilitating, the removal of the end-of-life equipment at St. Paul's Drive - creating a destination type space at Furrowfields.
  - Hunters Close. Equipment in reasonable condition although slide has been bent. Installed by developer c 2005. Replacement 10+ years.
  - Huntingdon Road (Infant and junior, infant replaced 21/22 plus new junior.) No works required.
  - Larham Way. Installed 21/22 no works required.
  - St Paul's Drive. Old equipment in rusty and poor condition – installed before 2000. Remove area completely as it holds no play value and is poorly located (See Furrowfields comments). Furrowfields Recreation ground is 300m away.

- Wenny Rec. New equipment 2020.
- Willey Terrace. Surface deterioration. Equipment old, (installed c 2012) limited but functional. Do not replace at end of lifestyle as other local facilities are more appropriate. Remove area at end of life offers little or no play value.

#### 9.10 Coates

- North Green. Equipment meets current standards, however it is of wood construction and high levels of preventative maintenance are starting to occur. Installed 2014. Replacement 7+ years.
- South Green. Limited equipment (installed c 2015) but slide (pre-2000) is in poor condition. Replacement slide being ordered 2023 through repairs budget.

#### 9.11 Doddington

- Beech Avenue, junior play installed 22/23, infant area repainted. No works required.

#### 9.12 Eastrea

- Springfields. All good condition (installed 2014). Replacement 15+ years.
- Thornham Way. All in reasonable condition - installed c 2005. Area repainted 22/23

#### 9.13 Friday Bridge

- West Drive. Reasonable condition. Installed by developer c 2010. Refurbishment 10+ years.

#### 9.14 Manea

- Williams Way. Good condition. Installed c 2012. Refurbishment 15 + years.
- Skate Park; maintained by Parish Council. Installed 21/22.

#### 9.15 March

- Albert Drive. Installed 2011. All reasonable condition. Refurbishment 15 + years.
- Dagless Way. Installed c 2012. Good condition. Refurbishment 15+ years.
- Gaul Road. Installed c 2012. Equipment in reasonable condition. Surface replaced 20/21 Replacement 15+ years.
- North Drive. Installed c 2014. All in reasonably good condition. Replacement 15+ years.
- Robingoodfellows. Installed c 2012. Mixture of new and old equipment. Explore install of purpose built MUGA and additional equipment in 2025/26.
- The Avenue. Installed c 2012. Good condition, consider additional equipment and refurbishment of area in 2026/27.

- West End Park. Mix of older and new equipment installed 21/22 Good condition. Replacement 15+ years (note limited scope for any expansion due to underground services). West End Park extension adoption in train with the developer - offering additional play facilities that are 1 year old.
- West End Park Outdoor Gym (Parts 1&2). Rarely used by the public. Installed c 2014. Periodic repairs to equipment but generally in good condition. Replacement 15+ years.
- Parson Drove. Installed 21/22 mix of new and old equipment, no works required.

#### 9.16 Whittlesey

- Burdett Grove. Installed 21/22 No works required.
- Manor Field. Installed c 2015. Mix of equipment but refreshment and install of new items to create a destination play area planned for 2024/25 using S106 and explore available grants. Any new equipment install will be subject to the result of an evaluation of the leisure centres and future plans for the buildings and their immediate environs.
- Pinewood Avenue. Installed c 1996. Old equipment – remove at end of life, offers little or no play value. Other facilities available locally.
- Snowley Park. Installed 20/21. No works required 20yrs+.
- Station Road. Installed c 2013. Area suffers from high levels of vandalism in particular the wet pour play safety surface which has had several thousands of pounds of repairs. To prevent further ongoing expenditure, removal of damaged equipment as and when until such time area is removed. Manor Play area is local to the site.
- Water Tower Park. Installed 2019. No changes required.

#### 9.17 Wisbech

- Barton Road. Installed in different stages. Swings and multi-point swings relatively new (c 2012) and other equipment c 2005. Average condition.
- Burcroft Road. Installed new swings and see-saw in 2018. Replacement or complete removal in 15 years. Limited equipment in this space; removal of equipment is recommended at the end of its life with no replacement.
- Conference Way. Installed c 2000. All equipment in average condition offers low play value.
- Copperfields Road, infant / junior play area. Installed c.2015. Good condition following recent repairs. 10-year life span.
- Heron Road. Installed c 2001. Average condition – repainted and fresh play bark 23/24.
- Jasmine Close. Installed climbing unit 2018. Swings installed c 2000.
- Malt Drive. Installed c 2001. Equipment is old but in average to good condition. Re painted and repairs 2023/24. Recommended removal as and when equipment is at end of life this space offers limited play value.

- Westmead Avenue. Installed c2003. Average condition new single pieces added 2021/22. Removal at end of life in approximately 10 years
- Wisbech Park. Installed 23/24. No works required.

# Agenda Item 8

<b>Agenda Item No:</b>	<b>8</b>	
<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>18 December 2023</b>	
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>Implementation of a Home Improvement Agency (HIA) Service from April 2024</b>	

## Cover sheet:

### **1 Purpose / Summary**

- 1.1 To award the HIA service following a procurement exercise from April 2024 for three years with possible three years extension option.
- 1.2 The Council has a statutory responsibility to manage a Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) service and commission a Home Improvement Agency to meet the needs of customers requiring adaptations to their homes to meet their needs.

### **2 Key Issues**

- 2.1 Until recently, the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) role was undertaken by Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council.
- 2.2 The Council is required to undertake a procurement exercise and invite organisations to tender for the role from April 2024. This process was carried out with the Council's Procurement team and in accordance with legislation.
- 2.3 The successful tender was submitted by East Cambridgeshire District Council.
- 2.4 The work is funded by the Better Care Fund, administered by Cambridgeshire County Council, with no impact on the council's General fund.

### **3 Recommendations**

- 3.1 Cabinet is recommended:
  - To approve the award of the tender to East Cambridgeshire District Council

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	KEY/15NOV23/01
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Samantha Hoy Portfolio Holder for Housing
Report Originator(s)	Sarah Gove – Housing & Communities Manager <a href="mailto:sgove@fenland.gov.uk">sgove@fenland.gov.uk</a> Dan Horn – Assistant Director <a href="mailto:dhorn@fenland.gov.uk">dhorn@fenland.gov.uk</a>
Contact Officer(s)	Sarah Gove (as above) Dan Horn (as above) Carol Pilson – Corporate Director <a href="mailto:cpilson@fenland.gov.uk">cpilson@fenland.gov.uk</a>
Background Papers	

## **1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 The Council procures a Home Improvement Agency service as part of the Council's statutory responsibilities to facilitate Disabled Facilities Grants to households who qualify for the service as vulnerable.
- 1.2 The work enables residents to maintain independent living in their own home and reduces the risk of a slip, trip or fall that leads to a deterioration in health and a non-elective visit to hospital with the associated costs and pressures on the NHS.
- 1.3 Until recently, the service was run by the Borough Council Kings Lynn & West Norfolk (BCKL&WN).
- 1.4 The Council thanks BCKL&WN for their support in delivering this service over many years.
- 1.5 The Council is required under procurement rules to tender for the HIA role from April 2024.
- 1.6 A tender exercise was undertaken in partnership with the Council's Procurement Team. A three-year contract with the option of a further three years was procured.
- 1.7 The successful tender was submitted by East Cambridgeshire District Council, subject to cabinet approval.

## **2 CONSULTATION**

- 2.1 The Council conducted a pre-market engagement exercise to capture feedback from potential bidders to inform the tender documents.

## **3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 3.1 N/A

## **4 IMPLICATIONS**

### **4.1 Legal Implications**

The procurement process was undertaken in accordance with procurement regulations. A contract between ECDC will be signed to commence from April 2024

### **4.2 Financial Implications**

The work is funded by the Better Care Fund which is administered by Cambridgeshire County Council. There is no impact on the Council's General Fund.

### **4.3 Equality Implications**

A Cambridgeshire wide Equality impact Assessment is attached at Appendix A



**4.4 Any Other Relevant Implications**

N/A

**5 SCHEDULES**

**Appendix A Equality Impact Assessment**

# **Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire & South Cambridgeshire District Councils**

## **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)**

This tool helps the Council ensure that we fulfil legal obligations of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) to have due regard to the need to –

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

**1. Title of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service:**

**Cambridgeshire Housing Adaptations and Repairs Policy**

**2. Webpage link to full details of the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service (if available)**

The Equality Impact Assessment will be available at:

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments>

<https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/equalities/completed-equality-impact-assessments-eias>

<https://www.fenland.gov.uk/article/13900/Equality-Impact-Assessments>

<http://huntingdonshire.gov.uk/council-democracy/equality/equality-impact-assessments-eias/>

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/the-council/equality-and-diversity/equality-impact-assessments/>

**3. What is the objective or purpose of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?**

The policy outlines the interventions which the five district councils in Cambridgeshire have agreed may be funded through the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Capital Allocation paid to them through the Department of Health's Better Care Fund, and aims to provide a consistent approach across the county.

The key objectives of the Policy are:

- To support healthy, safe and independent living
- To help prevent hospital, care home or residential school admission
- To facilitate a patient being discharged from hospital and enabling them to live safely and independently at home, including making it easier for carers to provide support
- To prevent the need for higher expenditure elsewhere in the health and/or social care system
- To improve housing conditions and remove hazards in the home (ie Category 1 hazards under the Health & Safety Rating System)

It includes four types of financial assistance which may be available to disabled people and those on low incomes:

1. Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to provide disabled adaptations in people's homes
2. Discretionary Top Up Assistance where the cost of works agreed through a Disabled Facilities Grant application is above the statutory maximum amount of £30,000
3. Discretionary Relocation Assistance to help disabled people to move to a more appropriate home; and
4. Discretionary Special Purposes Assistance for capital repairs or other minor works or interventions in the home.

It also allows funding of wider partnership projects or other services to help to meet the objectives of the policy.

It replaces each of the district councils' existing Regulatory Reform Order policies in relation to home adaptations and repairs.

#### **4. Responsible Service**

Cambridge City Council: Housing Services  
East Cambridgeshire District Council: Environmental Services  
Fenland District Council: Housing & Community Support  
Huntingdonshire District Council: Development Service  
South Cambridgeshire District Council: Affordable Homes

**5. Who will be affected by this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick those that apply)**

- Residents of Cambridgeshire **YES**
- Visitors to Cambridgeshire **NO**
- Staff **NO**

Please state any specific client group or groups (e.g. council tenants, tourists, people who work in the city but do not live here):

Disabled people and people on low incomes living in Cambridgeshire.

**6. What type of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service is this? (Please tick)**

- New **YES**
- Major change
- Minor change

It introduces a new county-wide policy, replacing each of the district councils' Regulatory Reform Order policies in relation to housing adaptations and repairs.

**7. Are other departments or partners involved in delivering this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick)**

- No
- YES** (*Please provide details*): Cambridgeshire County Council; Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group; Cambridgeshire Home Improvement Agency; Cambridgeshire & Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust (CPFT); East Cambridgeshire Care & Repair; Fenland Home Improvement Agency.

**8. Has the report on your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service gone to Committee? If so, which one?**

No – not yet.

**9. What research methods/ evidence have you used in order to identify equality impacts of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?**

Data: Demographic data; national housing occupation and conditions data; poverty data; etc

Involvement of partners:

- Project commissioned and steered by Integrated Commissioning Board (a health led group with responsibility for the Better Care Fund)
- Cambridgeshire County Council Adult Social Care, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group and district Home Improvement Agencies were members of the project team.

**10. Potential impacts**

For each category below, please explain if the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service could have a positive/ negative impact or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is. Consider impacts on service users, visitors and staff members separately.

**(a) Age - Any group of people of a particular age (e.g. 32 year-olds) , or within a particular age range (e.g. 16-24 year-olds) – in particular, please consider any safeguarding issues for children and vulnerable adults**

**(a) Age - Any group of people of a particular age (e.g. 32 year-olds) , or within a particular age range (e.g. 16-24 year-olds) – in particular, please consider any safeguarding issues for children and vulnerable adults**

All age groups: POSITIVE IMPACT

The policy provides for adaptations and home repairs and improvements for people of any age group who are disabled or on a low income; but it will particularly benefit those aged 55 and over.

- In Cambridgeshire in 2016 there are estimated to be around 652,000 people living in Cambridgeshire. Made up of: 120,000 children aged 0-15; 413,000 adults aged 16-64; and 119,000 older people 65 & over. <http://opendata.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/dataset/2015-based-population-and-dwelling-stock-forecasts-cambridgeshire-and-peterborough>
- In the next five years to 2021 the population is forecast to grow by an additional 28,800 adults (+7%), 11,200 children (+9%) and 15,900 older people (+13%). The main percentage increase is likely to be amongst the 75 & overs; a 21% increase during that period.
- In the Census 2011 around 15% of Cambridgeshire residents reported a long-term activity limiting health problem or disability. For those aged over 65 the percentage was 45%.

Building Research Establishment research found that, in England:

- Over one fifth of all older household groups (55 – 64, 65 – 74, over 75 and over 80) lived in a home that failed to meet the Decent Homes standard
- 780,000 households aged 55 years and over were in fuel poverty
- 1.3 million households aged 55 years and older lived in a home with at least one Category 1 hazard
- For households aged 55 years or more, the cost of poor housing to the NHS (for first year treatment costs) is £624 million with these costs dominated by excess cold hazards and those associated with falls (on stairs and on the level)
- The proportion of older households living in a home with the four “visitability” accessibility features assessed by the English Housing Survey (level access, flush threshold, WC at entrance level and sufficiently wide doors and circulation space) ranged from 4% (aged 55 – 64 years) to 7% (aged 80 years and over). Around a fifth of homes occupied by all age groups aged 65 years and over had none of these key features and this figure was 24% for households aged 55 – 64 years.

The National House Condition Survey 2015-16 estimated that:

- Around 29% of households where the oldest member was 85 are estimated to live in a non-decent home.
- Older people had less energy efficient homes compared with younger people, and those aged 85 and over had the lowest energy efficiency.

No direct safeguarding issues have been raised as being impacted by the policy, but the policy does include reference to the districts’ own Safeguarding Policies.

The policy states that it will be implemented within the framework of each council’s local safeguarding policy.



**(b) Disability - A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities**

**POSITIVE IMPACT**

- In the Census 2011 around 15% of Cambridgeshire residents reported a long-term activity limiting illness.
- Around 31% of households in England are estimated to contain someone with a long-term sickness or Disability. (English Housing Survey - Variations in Housing Circumstances report 2016-17)
- In 2014-15, around 9% of all households in England (around 1.9 million households) had one or more people with a long-term limiting disability that required adaptations to their home. (English House Condition Survey, Adaptations & Accessibility of Homes report 2014-15)

The policy offers:

- Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and Top-Up DFG assistance to disabled people to help them to live safely and independently at home
- Relocation assistance to disabled people where moving to another home is considered the best option.
- Discretionary Special Purposes assistance, including provision to help disabled people to have adaptations carried out more quickly.

Key objectives of the policy include:

- To support healthy, safe and independent living
- To help prevent hospital, care home or residential school admission
- To facilitate a patient being discharged from hospital and enabling them to live safely and independently at home, including making it easier for carers to provide support

**(c) Sex – A man or a woman.**

**POSITIVE IMPACT** on both – particularly on women

With higher levels of long term illness or disability amongst older people, and higher numbers of women than men in the older population, the positive impact is more likely to be felt by women.

Census 2011 data shows 54,700 women and 45,500 men aged 65 and over in Cambridgeshire. Women make up around 55% of the population aged over 65, and 67% of the population over 85.

**(d) Transgender – A person who does not identify with the gender they were assigned to at birth (includes gender reassignment that is the process of transitioning from one gender to another)**

NO IMPACT

**(e) Pregnancy and maternity**

NO IMPACT

**(f) Marriage and civil partnership**

NO IMPACT

**(g) Race - The protected characteristic 'race' refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.**

NO IMPACT

The policy itself should not disadvantage any particular race or ethnic group. However uptake of grants and loans by different equalities groups will be monitored, and actions put in place to try to redress if any imbalance becomes apparent.

**(h) Religion or belief**

NO IMPACT.

**(i) Sexual orientation**

NO IMPACT

**(j) Other factors that may lead to inequality – in particular – please consider the impact of any changes on low income groups or those experiencing the impacts of poverty**

**Low income groups: POSITIVE IMPACT**

Index of Multiple Deprivation figures show that Cambridgeshire has 16 Lower Super Output Areas in the 20% most deprived nationally. Fenland has the highest levels of deprivation in Cambridgeshire, followed by Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire then South Cambridgeshire.

<https://data.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/dataset/indices-deprivation>

[https://data.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/sites/default/files/IMD2015\\_Cambs%26Pet\\_Rank\\_A0\\_v4\\_0.pdf](https://data.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/sites/default/files/IMD2015_Cambs%26Pet_Rank_A0_v4_0.pdf)

9.3% of Cambridgeshire households are estimated to be in fuel poverty.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/sub-regional-fuel-poverty-data-2018>

Eligibility for Disabled Facilities Grants & DFG top up for adults, and Special Purposes Assistance (which may include home energy improvements) are based on assessment of financial circumstances of the applicant.

**Carers: POSITIVE IMPACT**

It is likely that a number of people requiring adaptations will be receiving some level care, either professionally or from family and/or friends. One of the objectives of the policy is: To facilitate a patient being discharged from hospital and enabling them to live safely and independently at home, 'including making it easier for carers to provide support'.

**11. Action plan – New equality impacts will be identified in different stages throughout the planning and implementation stages of changes to your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service. How will you monitor these going forward? Also, how will you ensure that any potential negative impacts of the changes will be mitigated? (Please include dates where possible for when you will update this EqlA accordingly.)**

Implementation of the policy will be monitored through the Home Improvement Agencies, which will include monitoring uptake of grants and loans based on protected characteristics.

The EqlA will be updated once the outcome of the government's reviews of Disabled Facilities Grants and Social Care is known.

**12. Do you have any additional comments?**

### 13. Sign off

Name and job title of lead officer for this equality impact assessment:

- Helen Reed, Cambridge City Council, Housing Strategy Manager.


Names and job titles of other assessment team members and people consulted:

- Liz Knox, Environmental Services Manager, East Cambridgeshire District Council
- Marie Beaumont, Senior Caseworker, East Cambridgeshire District Council
- Steve Hammond, Private Sector Housing Officer, Fenland District Council
- Caroline Hannon, Housing Strategy Manager, Huntingdonshire District Council
- Keith Tayler, Private Sector Housing Officer, Huntingdonshire District Council
- Julie Fletcher, Head of Housing Strategy, South Cambridgeshire District Council
- Alasdair Gladman, Grant Validation Officer, South Cambridgeshire District Council#
- Frances Swann, Manager, Cambs Home Improvement Agency
- Debra Barker, Caseworker, Cambs Home Improvement Agency
- Diana Mackay, Commissioner (Adults), People & Communities Directorate  
Cambridgeshire County Council
- Lisa Sparks, Commissioning Manager, Cambridgeshire County Council
- Aleksandra Mecan, Head of Community Services & Integration, Cambridgeshire &  
Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group

Date of EqIA sign off: 15<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Date of next review of the equalities impact assessment: Date of policy review – to be agreed.

Date to be published on websites (if known): March/April 2019

<b>Agenda Item No:</b>	9	
<b>Committee:</b>	Cabinet	
<b>Date:</b>	18 December 2023	
<b>Report Title:</b>	Property, Assets & Major Projects – On and Off-Street Parking Enforcement Update Paper	

## 1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 To update members on the current progress made by FDC and Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) in respect of the CPE implementation works, following the previous Cabinet update paper on 17 July 2023.

## 2 Key Issues

- Cambridgeshire County Council CPE Progress
- Traffic Regulation Order Survey, Review and Corrective Works
- CPE Civil/Special Enforcement Area Designation Order
- Agency Agreement and Service Level Agreement
- Off Street Parking Places Regulation Review
- Project Delivery Timeline
- On and Off-Street Enforcement and Administration Costs
- Project Risks and Funding
- Fenland Sign & Line Corrective Work Costs
- Updated CPE Set-up Costs
- Updated Estimated Operating Costs
- Revised CPE Timetable
- Liaison with Key Partners
- SCDC, HDC CPE Progress

## 3 Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
- a) Note progress made to date by FDC and CCC in relation to moving the implementation of CPE forward.
  - b) Note the predicted increase in the overall project delivery cost.
  - c) Request that a decision is taken on how the project shortfall will be funded.
  - d) To delegate to the Leader and Deputy Leader the ability to identify, take advice on as necessary and negotiate the red flag issues arising from the draft agency and service level agreements and to report back to Cabinet if agreement cannot be reached.

Wards Affected	ALL
Forward Plan Reference	
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Chris Boden – Leader of the Council Cllr Jan French – Deputy Leader of the Council
Report Originator(s)	Garry Edwards - Engineering Manager <a href="mailto:gedwards@fenland.gov.uk">gedwards@fenland.gov.uk</a>
Contact Officer(s)	Garry Edwards - Engineering Manager <a href="mailto:gedwards@fenland.gov.uk">gedwards@fenland.gov.uk</a> Peter Catchpole - Corporate Director (Finance) <a href="mailto:petercatchpole@fenland.gov.uk">petercatchpole@fenland.gov.uk</a>
Background Papers	FDC Cabinet Paper 17-07-2023

## Report:

### 1 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

#### **Cambridgeshire County Council CPE Progress**

- 1.1 Following funding approval from Cambridgeshire County Council in February, works commenced on developing the design work packages for the traffic regulation order sign and line rectification works. The design work packages being prepared by the County Councils framework contractor Milestone were due for completion at the end of September along with the associated corrective work costs.
- 1.2 Cambridgeshire County Council and FDC officers have continued to meet regularly to discuss progress for the various aspects of the CPE project.
- 1.3 The draft application to the Department for Transport for a Civil/Special Enforcement Area Designation Order for the introduction of CPE in Fenland was prepared in February by Cambridgeshire County Council in partnership with FDC. No further work on the application can be undertaken until:
  - agreement has been reached by both authorities on the CPE agency and service level agreements and a sealed agreement is in place.
  - correction work funding for the TRO sign and line works has been approved
  - an updated CPE implementation programme has been agreed including a delivery timeline for all remedial work.
  - FDC's preferred enforcement and administration service provider should also have been determined.

#### **Traffic Regulation Order Survey, Review and Corrective Works**

- 1.4 The design work packages prepared by the County Councils framework contractor Milestone have been used to inform target costs for each of Fenlands four Market Towns and surrounding villages.

- 1.5 The target costs referred to as tranches one to four have taken a number of months to prepare and have now been received. Each tranche represents one of the Market Towns and surrounding areas where traffic regulation orders are currently in place. Collectively, 294 signing defects were found to exist along with 743 lining defects. The target cost (estimated cost which could go up or down) for the signing and lining work totals £538,539.39.
- 1.6 The design package works have been prepared based on sign and line defects which were rated as poor at the time of the TRO survey. The TRO survey works were undertaken in November 2021 and therefore it is inevitable that further lining defects will undoubtedly exist. Lining which at the time was considered to be in fair condition (remedial work action needed within two years) will now likely need to be included.
- 1.7 At this stage it is not known which organisation would fund defects noted during the initial TRO survey as being fair, however it is estimated that such additional lining works could cost in the region of £53,853.94. This figure is purely an estimate and has been based on 10% of the lining query costs.
- 1.8 It is understood that the large uplift in the previously advised estimated target costs is the result of Milestone now having obtained estimates from one of their preferred sub-contractors.
- 1.9 It is important to note that civil parking enforcement relates only to the enforcement of static restrictions e.g. loading bays, double and single yellow lines etc and not moving traffic offences such as speed limit signs, driving in cycle lanes, one way systems and no entry restrictions etc. The enforcement of moving traffic offences will remain a police responsibility
- 1.10 Whilst the corrective signing works are not weather dependant, the lining works would need to be undertaken during the spring/summer months. The County Council have advised that FDC would need to place a purchase order for the corrective works with Milestone to enable the contractor to plan resources. Should there be any substantial delay in placing the order for the works, the target cost would need to be reviewed. The target costs used within this report are valid for 90 days.

### **CPE Civil/Special Enforcement Area Designation Order**

- 1.11 The Highway Authority can apply to the Secretary of State for a Civil/Special Enforcement Area Designation Order for the introduction CPE in March or September to correspond with parliament sitting time. Whilst a draft of the application has already been undertaken by CCC and FDC officers there are several areas that cannot be completed until a decision on the enforcement and administration provider has been agreed. The formation of the agency and service level agreement remains the priority and following common ground being found between both authorities, officers will continue to pursue enforcement and administration options.

### **Agency and Service Level Agreement**

- 1.12 The County Council require that a signed and sealed agency and service level agreement between the two authorities is in place prior to the application being made. Although both documents have been initially drafted there are a number of red flags within the agreement that officers have raised associated with various delegation clauses.

- 1.13 The County Council require FDC as agents to become responsible for the administration of all parking suspensions, waivers, and dispensations on the highway. To date members have indicated this would not be deemed acceptable due to the additional resource implications this would place on FDC. However, some common ground on the various red flag clauses will need to be found prior to seeking legal advice. The detail within the agreements will impact on both the necessary FDC resources needed to operate CPE and the annual revenue deficit placed on FDC for the term of the agreement.
- 1.14 As agents for CCC under the agency agreement FDC would need to provide a suitable and sufficient level of enforcement to cover Fenlands administrative area. Future changes in legislation such as pavement parking would influence the level of enforcement required which would likely increase operational costs.
- 1.15 Currently the County Council do not have a specific budget for sign and line maintenance and FDC officers are not aware of any proposal to make suitable provision. Whilst under the terms of the agreement the County Council would likely remain responsible for sign and line maintenance, there would be huge enforcement challenges for FDC post CPE implementation if PCN's cannot be issued due to continued poor signs and line maintenance.

#### **Off Street Parking Places Regulation Review**

- 1.16 In preparation for the implementation of CPE, a new district wide Off Street Parking Places Order has been drafted. It is recommended that short and long stay parking periods remain consistent across each of the four Market Towns (3/4 hours short, 9/10 hours long) to reduce the complexity for enforcement officers. Variation in maximum stay periods would however need to be more site specific for car parks located adjacent to facilities such as rail stations.
- 1.17 Fenland have twenty public car parks and a further eight FDC sites with parking facilities which would be brought in under the new OSPPO. Each site will require new signage and either additional or modified lining, the cost of which has been assessed separately to the TRO signing and lining requirements.

#### **Project Delivery Timeline**

- 1.18 FDC received the updated design work package target costs for all four Tranches on 23rd November. The target costs are valid for 90 days after which time Milestone would be entitled to reprice the works. If FDC are to procure the sign and line works using the County Councils framework contractor it should be noted that until a purchase order is placed, monthly price increases would be applicable.
- 1.19 An alternative means of procurement maybe an option by an open tendered approach and based on limited market pricing research (conducted by HDC) it is understood that the corrective work costs could be reduced by up to half. However it should also be recognised that a substantial amount of officer time would also be required to produce the necessary contract documentation and co-ordinate the works on the ground which would need to be recharged back to the project.



- 1.20 It is recognised that a purchase order is unlikely to be placed for the corrective sign and line works until such time as a mutual agreement between both authorities has been reached and sealed. The lining works can only be undertaken during dry weather conditions which would therefore limit the works delivery period to between March and September 2024 or 2025.
- 1.21 Fortunately, FDC's request was approved by the CPCA to extend the CPE grant funding to December 2025, however given some of the project constraints, the overall project delivery programme remains very tight.
- 1.22 It has previously been advised that applications to the Secretary of State for a CPE CEA/SEA order can only be made in April and October each year and that the application process takes approximately 6 months. The County Council have already advised they would not be prepared to make such an application until the agency and service level agreements are in place. Therefore time is of the essence to complete both these tasks by October 2024 to enable sufficient time to deliver both the corrective sign and line works and the enforcement and administrative service procurement.
- 1.23 The project critical path would be reached by October 2024 and should both the agency and service level agreements not be in place and an application for CPE made to the Secretary of State, an extension to the CPCA grant funding would be required.

#### **On and Off-Street Enforcement and Administration Costs**

- 1.24 Three neighbouring local authorities have to date expressed an interest in providing both the CPE administrative and enforcement services for FDC under a shared service provision contract. No further progress on this aspect of the CPE project has been made until the fundamentals between both organisations have been agreed. However in light of the rising material, fuel, and labour costs since undertaking the original CPE feasibility works in 2019, the estimated administration and enforcement costs have been updated.
- 1.25 Using the cheapest external service provision model it is now predicted the annual FDC CPE deficit will be £45,469.20 per year based on an operational expenditure of £227,346 within the first 5 years.

#### **Project Risks and Funding**

- 1.26 The greatest project risk remains affordability in terms of the rising implementation cost associated with the corrective sign and line costs. The initial estimated cost for the corrective works based on other local authority CPE implementation projects was £140k. However due to the usually high number of sign and line defects picked up during the TRO survey within Fenland, the cost of the sign and line corrective works is currently estimated to be £592,393.33. This means that there is currently a significant project funding shortfall in the region of £500,555.33.
- 1.27 The other project risk is associated with time and the ability for both authorities to reach a mutual agreement on the red flag issues highlighted within the draft agency agreement. Until such time as the agency agreement is in place the application to the Secretary of State cannot be made and the corrective sign and line works programmed.

- 1.28 The procurement of an enforcement and administration service provider along with implementing a shared service provider agreement is likely to take up to 9 months. The application for the CPE order will need to be made by April 2025 to allow sufficient time for the order to be implemented before the grant funding end and CPE go live date of December 2025.

### **Liaison with Key Partners**

- 1.29 Cambridgeshire County Council formally consulted all statutory consultees and partner organisations on the implementation of CPE within Fenland. The consultation closed at the end of April 2022 and no objections were received. The collective feedback will be used to inform the CEA/SEA DfT application.

### **SCDC, HDC CPE Progress**

- 1.30 An application to the Department for Transport for a Civil/Special Enforcement Area Designation Order for the introduction of CPE in South Cambridgeshire has been submitted by Cambridgeshire County Council in partnership with SCDC. A DfT application for bus lane and moving traffic contraventions will be applied for separately in April 2024.
- 1.31 The SCDC implementation works are now almost complete and the go live date scheduled for December 2023. The predicted implementation cost for SCDC is estimated to be in the region of £530k.
- 1.32 An unusually large amount of sign and line defects were recorded within Huntingdonshire during the TRO survey works, with a large proportion of the defects being located within St Neots. County Council officers completed a review of the TRO queries and predicted the HDC corrective sign and line work costs to be in the region of £950k.
- 1.33 This is a huge increase from the previously estimated cost of £280k. HDC officers have since appraised local market rates to see if the corrective sign and line works could be delivered outside of the CCC framework contract and within the Councils allocated budget. It is currently not known the extent of savings that could be made, or the level of staff resource needed to procure the works outside of the CCC framework contract.
- 1.34 Huntingdonshire District Council have been working on a draft CPE agency and service level agreement with Cambridgeshire County Council following a member consultation exercise. It is understood that some progress has been made on agreeing some of the red flag areas.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Note the progress being made by FDC and CCC in respect of moving the introduction of CPE forward.
- 2.2 Note the predicted increase in the overall project delivery cost.
- 2.3 Request that a decision is taken on how the project shortfall will be funded.
- 2.4 That the member/officer CPE project team meet to discuss and agree the agency agreement red flag areas.

### **3 CONSULTATION**

3.1 N/A

### **4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 The only alternative option is to continue as is now with the Police carrying out any enforcement duties although this is not seen as a priority area of focus for the Police. Additionally given the current non-compliant status of the vast majority of the districts' signs and lines enforcement in any guise is considered challenging at present.

### **5 IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Legal Implications**

5.1 The legal implications so far as they are currently known are as set out within the main body to this report. A full review of the contractual documentation will need to take place once the red flag areas of the draft Agency Agreement has been agreed by members.

### **6 Financial Implications**

6.1 Now that the target cost for the corrective sign and line works has been received, it is estimated that there will be a significant budget shortfall in the region of £500,000. Unless further external funding is obtained or internal funding allocated, the implementation of CPE would be unviable.

6.2 It is likely that some savings could be made from tendering the corrective sign and line works, however this is likely to need additional FDC and contractual resource to procure and co-ordinate the works on the ground.

### **7 Equality Implications**

7.1 None

### **8 SCHEDULES**

8.1 Fenland Sign & Line Corrective Work Costs

8.2 Updated CPE Set-up Costs

8.3 Updated Estimated CPE Operating Costs

8.4 Revised CPE Timetable

## 8.1 Fenland Sign & Line Corrective Work Costs

<b>Fenland Sign &amp; Line Corrective Work Costs</b>				
(Cost produced using CCC NEC framework contract - Option D)				
<b>Tranche One - Whittlesey</b>		<b>Cost per Query</b>	<b>Target Cost £ (not an actual cost and may rise or fall)</b>	<b>Total Estimated Cost for Tranche £</b>
No. of Sign/Post/Foundation Queries	44	£395.33	£17,394.52	-
No. of Lining Queries	150	£507.10	£76,065.19	-
<b>T1 Estimated Cost</b> (cost now outside of 90 day period and to be updated)				<b>£ 93,459.71</b>
<b>Tranche Two - Chatteris</b>		<b>Cost per Query</b>	<b>Target Cost £ (not an actual cost and may rise or fall)</b>	<b>Total Estimated Cost for Tranche £</b>
No. of Sign/Post/Foundation Queries	56	£509.37	£28,524.52	-
No. of Lining Queries	89	£655.84	£58,370.15	-
<b>T2 Estimated Cost</b> (cost now outside of 90 day period and to be updated)				<b>£ 86,894.67</b>
<b>Tranche Three - March</b>		<b>Cost per Query</b>	<b>Target Cost £ (not an actual cost and may rise or fall)</b>	<b>Total Estimated Cost for Tranche £</b>
No. of Sign/Post/Foundation Queries	55	£623.28	£34,280.58	No. of Sign/Post/Foundation Queries
No. of Lining Queries	148	£417.75	£61,826.68	No. of Lining Queries
<b>T3 Estimated Cost</b> (cost now outside of 90 day period and to be updated)				<b>£ 96,107.26</b>
<b>Tranche Four - Wisbech</b>		<b>Cost per Query</b>	<b>Target Cost £ (not an actual cost and may rise or fall)</b>	<b>Total Estimated Cost for Tranche £</b>
No. of Sign/Post/Foundation Queries	139	£439.00	£61,021.41	No. of Sign/Post/Foundation Queries
No. of Lining Queries	356	£564.77	£201,056.34	No. of Lining Queries
<b>T3 Estimated Cost</b>				<b>£ 262,077.75</b>
Total Estimated Cost for All Four Tranches (excl contingencies)				<b>£ 538,539.39</b>
<b>Total Estimated Cost for All Four Tranches (Inc 10% Contingencies)</b>				<b>£ 592,393.33</b>

**Note:** The County Council provided updated target costs for All four Tranches on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The above target costs are valid for 90 days following which milestone would be entitled to reprice. The target cost excludes any contingency allowance for undertaking the corrective works in 2024 which have been based on the 2021 sign and line survey.

## 8.2 Updated CPE Set-up Costs

Items	Capital Set-up Cost (£)	Revenue Shortfall (£)
<b>Feasibility Work Costs</b>		
Fenland Parking Review and Strategy Document (for FDC Car Parks) Recommended - Consultancy Cost	£15,000	-
Consultant cost for On Street CPE feasibility study	£6,518	-
Consultant cost for On Street TRO sign & lines survey and submission of business case to DfT in conjunction with CCC	£54,269.00	-
Legal costs for DfT application indicative	£5,000	-
<b>Estimated Implementation Costs</b>		
Consultant cost for implementation works	£29,375.00	
TRO corrective sign and line costs. CCC target cost based on 2021 survey	£538,539.39	
Contingency Allowance for 2021 corrective sign & line implementation in 2024 based on 2021 sign and line survey (10%)	£53,853.94	
Consultation costs for FDC Parking Place Orders Review	3,500	
Legal and Consultation costs for FDC Parking Place Orders (Estimated)	10,000	
Signage costs for updated FDC Parking Place Orders and short and long stay parking	57,500	
Solar Powered Ticket Dispensing Machines (28 no solar machines for 28 car parks 2425 spaces @ £4000 Each)	£112,000	
Permitting set up costs for Off-Street Car Parks	£10,000	
Public Consultation/ Advertisement	£5,000	
<b>Total Estimated Set-Up Cost</b>	<b>£900,555.33</b>	
<b>Estimated Budget Shortfall</b>		<b>£500,555.33</b>

## 8.3 Updated Estimated CPE Operating Costs

Items	Revenue Cost Per year	Revenue Income per year
Income from PCNs based on issuing 2432 tickets (@ £50-£70) a year using 2 Full Time CEO's		£62,001
County Court Costs		£1,337
Operational Management	£12,005	
On Street Enforcement Cost	£50,222.40	
Off Street Enforcement Cost	£31,592.80	
Ticket & Permit Processing	£14,987.00	
<b>Total Estimated Income</b>		<b>£63,338</b>
<b>Total Estimated Operational Costs</b>	<b>£108,807.20</b>	
<b>Annual Revenue Deficit</b>	<b>£45,469.20 DEFICIT</b>	

### Notes

- Operating costs have been based on 2 full-time officers only. It is considered that 4 FTE CEO's would provide greater cover and resilience but would also further increase revenue costs. Having less CEO's or using part time CEO's would consequently reduce PCN income by virtue of having less time deployed on-street issuing tickets. This would also not provide sufficient resource levels to police on street and short/long stay parking facilities within the four Market Towns and 28 Council parking facilities.
- The annual estimated CPE operating costs have been produced using the fully external enforcement and administration feasibility model V3 preferred by members.
- Running Civil Parking Enforcement in a largely rural area with spread out Market Towns, such as those in Fenland, the factor of Civil Enforcement Officer downtime has to be considered. CEO's will spend time travelling between small market towns and the likelihood of finding any parking infringements is lower than in a busy city centre such as Cambridge.
- The above income and operational CPE costs excludes any costs associated with managing On-street parking, permits, dispensations, waivers, and suspensions which would be subject to agreement with CCC.

## 8.4 Revised CPE Timetable

Action	Indicative dates	Individual Task Duration
Draft and Implement an FDC/CCC CPE Agency Agreement and SLA (subject to Red Flag areas being agreed)	Jan-June 2024	6 months
CCC to prepare and submit a detailed costed business case/application to DfT	July 2024	1 month
Submission of CPE Application to DfT October for designation order. (current time for DfT consideration/approval is 6 months)	October 2024	6 months
Undertake a review of all FDC off street parking places orders to include short & long stay parking and permitting	June-Sept 2024	3 months
Consultant to undertake an FDC Parking Review and District wide parking Strategy to link to the corporate transport objectives	July-Dec 2024	6 months
Implementation of On-street corrective sign and line works	March 2025	6 months
Implementation of CPE FDC car park signage	March 2025	6 months
Public/Partner Notice (mandatory prior to implementation of CPE)	October 2025	2 months

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<b>Agenda Item No:</b>	10	
<b>Committee:</b>	Cabinet	
<b>Date:</b>	18 December 2023	
<b>Report Title:</b>	Wisbech High Street Update	

## 1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with a monthly update regarding ongoing work related to 24 High Street, Wisbech.

## 2 Key Issues

### 2.1 24 High Street Construction Progress

Etec, the main contractor, continues the construction work on 24 High Street with works remaining below street level.

Piling works commenced last month. An initial approach of using auger piles was halted when the system monitoring movement of buildings either side of 24 High Street detected movement.

This system monitors movement continuously and reports any variation to Etec.

Following this initial concern, a revised scheme using continuous flight auger piles was implemented, with the speed of works slowed down. This revised option has also caused movement although these are very small. Whilst very small, there are still many piles to complete, so the project team is assessing the suitability of the current technique and whether a further alternative technique would prove more appropriate.

At the time of writing any delay is unknown, nor the cost of such a delay, nor the cost of any piling revision. Legal advice is being sought to determine whether, in the case of additional costs, if the responsibility falls on the Council, the contractor, or the piling sub-contractor.

### 2.2 11-12 High Street

At the time of writing the options report regarding 11-12 High Street has not been received. It is anticipated in December, but as it seems likely that it will miss this report's dispatch date it will be considered by Cabinet in January.

## 3 Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet notes the current position in relation to the 24 High Street construction project in Wisbech High Street and notes information regarding the property at 11-12 High Street.

Wards Affected	Medworth Ward	
Forward Plan Reference	KEY/06SEP22/01	
Portfolio Holders	Cllr Chris Seaton Cllr Ian Benney Cllr Chris Boden	Portfolio Holder for Social Mobility and Heritage Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance
Report Originator	Phil Hughes	Head of Service
Contact Officers	Paul Medd Peter Catchpole Mark Greenwood	Chief Executive Corporate Director and S151 Officer Head of Property, assets and Major Projects

**DRAFT 6 MONTH CABINET FORWARD PLAN –  
Updated 7 December 2023**



(For any queries, please refer to the published forward plan)

**CABINET**

<b>CABINET DATE</b>	<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>LEAD PORTFOLIO HOLDER</b>
22 Jan 2024	1. Fees and Charges 2024/25	Cllr Boden
	2. Investment Board Update	Cllr Boden Cllr Benney Cllr Tierney
	3. Sport England Swimming Pool Support Fund	Cllr Boden Cllr Miscandlon
	4. Sport England Swimming Pool Support Fund – Capital Bid	Cllr Boden Cllr Miscandlon
	5. Leisure Facility Strategy – Initial Assessment Phase	Cllr Miscandlon
	6. Climate Change Action Plan Update	Cllr Tierney
	7. Cambridgeshire Priorities Capital Fund	Cllr Boden
	8. Procurement of Contact Centre System	Cllr Tierney
	9. Renewal of Building Control Services	Cllr Laws
	10. Final Formalisation of the North Cambridgeshire Place Development Board	Cllr Boden
	11. Constitutional Amendments	Cllr Boden
	12. Quay repairs for Wisbech Port (TBC)	Cllr Boden Cllr Benney
	13. Cabinet Draft Forward Plan	Cllr Boden
	14. Wisbech High Street Update (confidential) (TBC)	Cllr Seaton Cllr Hoy Cllr Tierney
	15. Smart Technology (confidential)	Cllr Boden Cllr Tierney
26 Feb 2024	1. Business Plan 2024/25	Cllr Boden
	2. Budget & Mid Term Financial Strategy	Cllr Boden
	3. Fenland Transport Strategy	Cllr Seaton
	4. Accommodation Review	Cllr Boden
	5. Cabinet Draft Forward Plan	Cllr Boden
	6. Wisbech High Street Update (confidential) (TBC)	Cllr Seaton Cllr Hoy Cllr Tierney
18 Mar 2024	1. Investment Board Update & review of the Commercial & Investment Strategy	Cllr Boden Cllr Benney Cllr Tierney

<b>CABINET DATE</b>	<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>LEAD PORTFOLIO HOLDER</b>
	2. Leisure Facility Strategy	Cllr Miscandlon
	3. Cabinet Draft Forward Plan	Cllr Boden
	4. Wisbech High Street Update (confidential) (TBC)	Cllr Seaton Cllr Hoy Cllr Tierney
22 Apr 2024	1. Cabinet Draft Forward Plan	Cllr Boden
	2. Wisbech High Street Update (confidential) (TBC)	Cllr Seaton Cllr Hoy Cllr Tierney
TBC May 2024	1. Cabinet Draft Forward Plan	Cllr Boden
	2. Wisbech High Street Update (confidential) (TBC)	Cllr Seaton Cllr Hoy Cllr Tierney
TBC Jun 2024	1. Appointment to Outside Bodies	Cllr Boden
	2. Grounds Maintenance Contract – Future Options	Cllr Murphy
	3. Cabinet Draft Forward Plan	Cllr Boden
	4. Wisbech High Street Update (confidential) (TBC)	Cllr Seaton Cllr Hoy Cllr Tierney

TBC = To be confirmed

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3, 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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